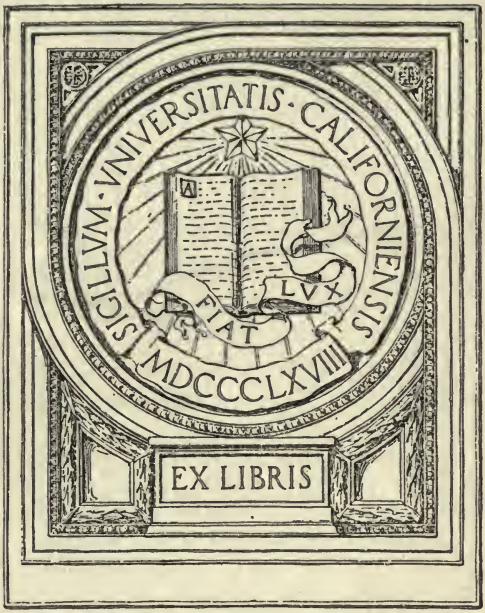
TRAINING OF A SALESMAN

WILLIAM MAXWELL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to find themselves"

THE TRAINING OF A SALESMAN

BY

WILLIAM MAXWELL

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WANTED—A MAN WITH EXECUTIVE ABILITY

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THE TRAINING OF A SALESMAN

BY

WILLIAM MAXWELL

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THOMAS A. EDISON, INC.

AUTHOR OF "IF I WERE TWENTY-ONE," "SALESMANSHIP," ETC.

6 ILLUSTRATIONS

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This volume is dedicated to a lady to whom I succeeded in selling myself and who, I hope, has never rued her bargain

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PREFACE

BEING a salesman, I realize the limitations that are upon the man who attempts to teach salesmanship. It is, perhaps, the most human of occupations, and is correspondingly difficult to diagram. However, the following simple diagram is expressive of the fundamentals of salesmanship, and your interest in the chapters that follow will be stimulated if you carry these principles in mind.

THE FOUR PHASES OF SALESMANSHIP

	Manifest a genuine but adequately respectful friendliness that conveys to your prospective customer a pleasant sense of your personal interest in his needs.
Gaining Attention	If practicable, employ an act or remark that detaches your prospective customer's mind from all other subjects, and fixes his entire attention on the article in which he has indicated interest, or in respect of which you desire to excite his interest.
Enlarging Interest	Create in your prospective customer's mind an agreeable picture of his ownership and use of the article which you are endeavoring to sell.

Creating Conviction	Reiterate the advantages or pleasure that will accrue to your prospective customer from his purchase of the article you are attempting to sell.
Closing	Make it easy for your prospective customer to say yes; make it difficult for him to say no.

The methods of the salesman must vary somewhat, according to the character of his goods, the kind of people who buy them, and the circumstances of each case, but always he should bear in mind the fundamental phases of a sale, and endeavor to accomplish each phase before he proceeds to the next. In some instances the customer's premeditation may have determined him to purchase, and the salesman, in such cases, should merely confirm by his own actions and remarks the good judgment of the customer. However, the salesman should not assume a predetermination to buy unless it is clearly manifest by the demeanor of the prospective customer.

THE AUTHOR.

ORANGE, N. J.,
January, 1919.

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

THE TRAINING OF A SALESMAN

INTRODUCTION

From the time we entered the war until its conclusion the selling of goods was regarded as a more or less non-essential occupation. I recall that a New York evening newspaper took occasion to condemn editorially the capable salesman who, in war times, persuaded people to buy articles that were not indispensable. The process of reasoning which led to such condemnation results logically in the conclusion that the same salesman can be exceedingly useful during the first ten years of peace. This period will be marked by numerous industrial and financial readjustments, some of which will tend to stimulate and others to retard business. The banker has the important responsibility of dealing with the financial phenomena that

follow the various national and international reactions to the war, but it is probable that the greatest responsibility for our national prosperity during the first ten years of peace will fall on the shoulders of our salesmen. Salesmanship will attain a new dignity, and will offer greater opportunities than ever before.

Thomas A. Edison, with his characteristic habit of epitomizing in a few terse words the most complex of problems, has recently said:

Every business man should speed up his sales organization. The salesmen of the country can do more than anyone else to keep the wheels of industry turning at full speed. The salesman had to take a back seat during the war, but his time has now come. Give him a chance.

Mr. Edison has not overstated the importance of salesmanship in the post bellum period, of ten years or more, that is destined to mark an entirely new epoch in the industrial history of this country.

Under normal conditions, supply is nearly

always ahead of natural demand. Aside from crop shortage and other abnormal influences beyond the bounds of human control, salesmanship is the most important instrumentality for the stimulation of demand to a point that insures a profit to the producer.

In normal or subnormal times, salesmanship is the neck of the jug that holds the profits of commerce, and those profits ordinarily flow into the pockets of industry no faster than salesmanship pours them.

I can think of scarcely anything that is worse form than to quote one's self, but I may perhaps be pardoned for calling attention to a thought of my own, in concordance with Mr. Edison's, although expressed less succinctly, which appeared in the little volume, "If I Were Twenty-one," written before we entered the war. This was the thought:

With certain exceptions, the business of this country rests largely on a demand which is artificially created by salesmanship. But for the stimulus of salesmanship that forces upon us new fashions in wearing ap-

parel, half the cotton fields would be fallow ground, and half the silkworms and sheep would be out of work. But for the salesmanship that forces on to us new kinds of mechanical devices, half of the mines would be closed and half of the furnaces would be cold. But for the feverish business activity that salesmanship inspires, half the freight cars would be rusting and rotting in railroad switch yards.

Having in mind the demand upon our industries and agriculture that war has made, and considering the needs that Europe's four years of industrial inactivity have created, the foregoing may seem a far-fetched theory, but I feel every confidence that, within the first year of peace and at frequent intervals during the first ten years, there will be literally millions whose bread and butter and savings bank accounts will depend on the ability and industry of our salesmen. There will be men working in the iron mines and steel mills who would be idle if hard-working salesmen were not on the job. There will be herdsmen clipping sheep and "darkeys"

picking cotton who would be loafing if salesmen and advertising men were not actively practicing their related professions. As Mr. Edison has said, "the salesman's time has come."

If I were a soldier, mustered out of service, or a war worker, returning to civilian pursuits, and not quite certain what career offered me the best opportunities, I should seriously consider salesmanship. If I were already a salesman, I should endeavor to become a better one. The rewards of good salesmanship are going to be high.

A great many persons believe that good salesmen, like good poets, are born and not made. A smaller number hold the opinion that certain psychological formulæ, if consistently followed, will enable practically any person of average intelligence to become a successful salesman. It seems to me that neither view reflects a true comprehension of salesmanship.

Speaking in a broad sense, nearly all

human effort, other than manual labor, is salesmanship. When a young man woos a maid he is trying to sell his society. When he seeks a job he is trying to sell his services. When a clergyman exhorts his congregation he is attempting to sell salvation. When a politician runs for office he is making an effort to sell his theories of government to the voters. It may be remarked in passing that successful clergymen and politicians are usually good salesmen of merchandise when they turn their minds to that pursuit.

Salesmanship is not alone the art of making people want to buy. It is also the art of making it very difficult for them to resist buying.

The training of a salesman is a process of absorption from experience. If the process is unconscious it will be slow and the results limited. On the other hand, if the salesman draws avidly upon his daily experience, and translates it into feasible rules of action, he will make rapid progress, and there are prac-

tically no limits to the growth of his knowledge and the perfection of his technique.

The object of this book is to deal with numerous practical phases of salesmanship in a way which will suggest the psychology involved without propounding psychological formulæ. If it succeeds in stimulating the salesman reader to an analysis of his daily experience, in the light of the suggestions made, it will have accomplished its object, and justified its title, since the training of a salesman is coincident with and derived from his own experience.

Inasmuch as the successful practice of salesmanship is quite likely to expand a salesman's career to a point where it involves other important branches of business, and as this fact is one of the alluring rewards of successful salesmanship, I have included three chapters which depart somewhat from the fundamentals of salesmanship, but nevertheless deal with principles and practices of business that are likely to be of importance

to the man who expects to become a successful salesman.

It should be understood that I use the term salesman in a generic sense. In writing the contents of this book, I have had the saleswoman very prominently in mind and I sincerely hope that the chapters which follow may prove helpful to the woman who decides to adopt the selling of merchandise as her profession.

SIZING UP A CUSTOMER

THE other afternoon I sat in a private parlor at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel and interviewed twelve candidates for the position of traveling salesman. They came in at intervals and each was given an opportunity to sell himself to our sales manager, our assistant sales manager and myself.

Several of the applicants said that they understood psychology *thoroughly,* and nearly all of them stated that they could read character almost at a glance.

Five years ago some of these same men who now claim to be psychologists probably thought psychology was a disease or a secret society, and if anyone had asked them about character reading at that time a majority would very likely have put it in the same class as telling fortunes with tea leaves. All of which goes to show how the world has progressed in the past five years. Nowadays it's

mighty hard to find a salesman who doesn't claim to be a psychologist or a character reader or both.

A few weeks ago I had the pleasure of talking to the Baltimore Advertising Men's Club on " Salesmanship." I don't know much about salesmanship, but I like to talk about it. On this occasion I happened to say that I didn't believe a salesman could read a customer's character. After the meeting, during those pleasant moments when people come up and shake your hand and tell you how much they enjoyed your talk, a square-toed gentleman said to me: " I see you don't agree with Edison and Hugh Chalmers."

I was startled. To disagree with Mr. Edison and Mr. Chalmers in respect of a subject on which they both agree seemed rather presumptuous. Falteringly, I inquired: "How's that?" The gentleman replied: "You say that character can't be read; they say it can."

I had to admit I would believe Mr. Edison if he said he could read character and that,

while I didn't know Mr. Chalmers very well, I'd also take his word at par.

The gentleman continued: "Edison says the human machine will receive closer attention in the future than any other piece of machinery. Chalmers says that the study of man is the most profitable study in the world, or words to that effect."

What could I say to that, except to express my hearty concurrence with the views of Mr. Edison and Mr. Chalmers, which is precisely what I did do?

"Then I misunderstood your remarks about reading character," the gentleman persisted.

"No," I replied, "I will stick to my statement that no one can read character, although one may read the marks of degeneracy or wrong-doing. I don't believe either Mr. Edison or Mr. Chalmers believes that he can read a normal man's character. Through long association with a man they may feel that they can form a dependable estimate of

his character, but I don't think they seriously believe they can fathom a man's character in a slight acquaintance with him."

"Listen here," the Baltimore man said. "Let me ask you this question. If a very dignified and well dressed man entered your store, would you slap him on the back and try to joke with him?"

"No, I would not," I conceded. I might have added that I wouldn't hit Charlie Chaplin on the back, or try to joke with him, if he came into my store, but I didn't happen to think about that until too late to say it.

"Well, then," he triumphantly asserted, "you practically admit that you do believe there is something in character reading."

Unfortunately the discussion stopped there, as I had to shake the hand of another gentleman, who agreed with me that you can't read character. I don't know whether he had been against a gold brick man, or how he had reached his opinion, but I am pretty sure he is right.

Just think of it, if you will. A prominent and successful business man believes, or at least seems to believe, that he is making progress in character reading because he refrains from poking a frock-coated customer in the ribs. A frock coat, a top hat and a long face don't denote character. They denote either pose or temperament. At one time I made a practice of getting acquainted with and studying crooks. The biggest crook I ever knew wore habitually a frock coat, a high collar, a black string cravat and a black slouch hat. He looked like a Missouri or Mississippi Congressman, but if you had walked behind him and said in a gruff voice: "The chief wants to see you," he would have replied, without a moment's hesitation: "That's all right, officer, I'll go right along with you; I won't make you any trouble; you don't need to handcuff me."

I grant that a salesman shouldn't get immediately familiar and facetious with a frock-coated man, but I also contend that he

shouldn't take liberties with a man who wears overalls. One of the most dignified and punctilious men I ever knew was a gentleman who changed his linen twice a month and probably bathed less frequently. Incidentally he was worth about half a million dollars.

The foregoing merely serves to lead up to the greatest and the most common sin of retail salesmen. I call it their belief in their ability to "pick winners."

You walk into a Fifth Avenue store. The salesman sizes you up for a live one or a dead one, as the case may be. It doesn't matter what you are. It only matters how the salesman happens to classify you and, after he has done so—read your character, as he probably calls it—nothing that you can do will change his opinion of you. If he sized you up as a dead one, but you nevertheless buy something, he is more than likely to conclude that you were embarrassed by his aloof attitude and made a purchase to save your

face. Almost never will he admit that he sized you up wrongly—in other words, misread your character.

I am interested in three small retail stores and I am confident that their aggregate business would increase 50 per cent. if the salesmen could be persuaded that they can't "size up a customer."

I have a friend who conducts a specialty shop on Fifth Avenue. He says: "I can't break my salesmen of the habit of trying to size up the people who come to the store. If they think a visitor is a live one, they are good salesmen. If they think he is a dead one, they are poor salesmen. They don't seem to realize that it's a part of their duty to try to turn dead ones into live ones."

"Turning dead ones into live ones" is the most important and the most highly paid branch of salesmanship. Wholesale salesmen realize that fact, but comparatively few retail salesmen seem to be conscious of it.

A good many years ago I was standing in

a cigar store in a Western town. The cigar store was right next door to a toy shop. The time was a week or so before Christmas. A couple of country women entered the cigar store. Just inside the threshold, they paused and looked around in confusion. One of them stammered: "I guess we're in the wrong place; we want to go to that store where they sell toys."

The salesman came from behind the counter and politely said: "We don't sell toys here, but a good many of the ladies are interested in our carved pipes—carved in the Black Forest, you know. The toy store is just next door, but before you go, I'd like to show you one of the pipes. It's really rather a curiosity—more interesting to children than a good many toys—and, of course, a gift that any man will appreciate."

While he was saying all this, he was getting out the pipe. The women looked at each other doubtfully and then at the pipe. One of them pointed to the distorted features of

a gnome carved on the bowl of the pipe and said to her companion: "I wonder if Albert wouldn't like a pipe like that?"

"Sure he would," the latter agreed.

"And it would tickle little Al, too, wouldn't it?" the first woman continued. "He'd get as much fun out of a pipe like that as his pa would. How much is it, Mister?"

A moment later the sale was closed and those two women, who had blundered into a cigar store under the mistaken impression that it was a toy shop, went out with a rather expensive carved pipe. They were dead ones when they came in, but the salesman turned them into live ones.

It would have been much easier for the salesman merely to say: "Next door, ladies," as soon as they revealed that they sought the toy shop. The chances of making a sale to them seemed to me exceedingly remote, and I admit that I thought the salesman was wasting his time in attempting to sell them a pipe. That salesman was different from

the average salesman. I happen to know that he isn't a salesman any more, and, if he owed me a hundred thousand dollars, I shouldn't worry at all about being able to collect it.

The difference between that salesman and the average salesman is a difference which the latter must remove before he can become anything more than an average salesman.

I know a retail salesman who literally spends hours every day in polishing his finger nails, but is reluctant to "waste time" on a shopper who, in his opinion, " has no intention of buying."

The courage to tackle " dead ones " and the willingness to waste time on them are requisites of high-grade retail salesmanship. If I were a retail salesman, I would ruthlessly eradicate from my mind any idea I might be inclined to have that I could pick " live ones."

I used to know a Swede who owned ten sections of land in Texas. One spring, he

shipped ten carloads of steers to Chicago. He came along with the cattle. His boots hurt him and, after he had received a cheque for the steers, he took off his boots and went downtown in his bare feet.

Barefooted, wearing cheap blue overalls and a hickory shirt, and strong with the odor of his own unwashed body, as well as the pungent smell of his cattle, he wandered hesitatingly into a large wholesale hardware house. A salesman "sized him up." "What do *you* want, old man?" the salesman patronizingly inquired.

"I tank I get a little bob wire."

"How much you want, Ole?"

"Well, I tank I yust fence everyting with tree wires. I got ten sections. That make forty mile to fence and tree times forty make hundred twenty. I ain't yust know how many spools of bob wire that make, but I know I want hundred twenty mile of wire."

The salesman called the police. He thought he had a crazy man on his hands. It

was only when the Swede was searched for weapons and they found his bank-book and Clay, Robinson & Company's cheque for ten carloads of steers that the salesman realized he hadn't "sized up" this Swede rancher with absolute accuracy.

In New York City are two well-known department stores, which may fairly be regarded as rivals. To mention either by name would probably be resented by their respective managers, as department stores are proverbially sensitive to criticism. Therefore, let us call one X, and the other Y.

An authority on retail merchandising said to me the other day:

"Do you know how to create the most efficient department store in the world in less than twenty-four hours?"

I admitted that I did not and said that I was willing to bite.

"It's perfectly simple," he replied. "Give X's advertising department to Y, or transfer Y's sales force to X and you would have the

most efficient retail sales organization in the world. Until you do that the Marshall Field store in Chicago has them both skinned on merchandising methods."

I subsequently made inquiries and, so far as my inquiries extend, it would appear that the weight of competent opinion is to the effect that the advertising of X is considerably better than Y's, while the latter's sales force is regarded as more resourceful and effective than the sales people at the X store.

Care is taken in the selection of employees at the store of Mr. X—they are fully as well paid as the employees of Y, and I am informed that Mr. X spends a good deal of money in teaching, or attempting to teach, salesmanship to his employees. Undoubtedly, he has a great many good salesmen and saleswomen. I have come across some of them in my occasional visits to his New York store. On the other hand, I think that the most conspicuous examples of bad salesmanship I have ever observed were encountered

in the X store. It has occurred to me that the desire of Mr. X to give good service to his patrons may possibly have led his subordinates to impress physical alertness on the sales people to the neglect of some of the other qualities which good sales people should possess.

Another theory is that perhaps the goods of the X store are so effectively advertised that the less intelligent and ambitious of his sales people unconsciously degenerate into mere order takers.

Possibly you will say: "Why theorize; why not ask Mr. X or some of his assistants if it is true, and, if so, why the salesmanship at their store isn't as good as the salesmanship at other high-grade New York stores or as at Marshall Field's, in Chicago?"

I have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. X. I know how thoroughly he is in touch with every important phase of his business. I am quite well acquainted with one of his assistants, who is a keenly intelligent student

of merchandising. Nevertheless, I feel that it would be quite useless to ask either of them why the salesmanship in their store isn't so good as the salesmanship in some of the other New York stores. I'll venture to say that they don't know the cause. It's easy to criticise, but it isn't always easy to discover and remove the causes for criticism. At this particular moment I am personally in a slump and at least five of my assistants are likewise. All of us know it, but none of us knows the cause. When we get out of this slump, if we ever do, we probably shan't know how we did it.

An explanation which retail merchants frequently make to a manufacturer for the poor salesmanship applied to the manufacturer's goods is this: "We are here to serve our patrons; to give them what they want—not to teach them what they ought to want." In other words, according to this theory, if I, for example, ask a boot and shoe merchant for a pair of shoes, similar to the ones I hap-

pen to be wearing, and the latter have leather soles, it is no part of the retailer's function to familiarize me with the new composition soles which are coming into use. Instead, it is his duty to sell me a pair of shoes with leather soles, even though he may have to charge me more and make a smaller percentage of profit himself than would be the case if he had converted me to the new composition soles, which are as sightly as leather soles and some of which, I am informed, wear as well as leather.

The buying public is partly responsible for this attitude on the part of retail merchants and retail salesmen. The time-worn jest about the druggist who tries to sell you " something just as good " and the warnings of some advertisers against " attempted substitutions " have led a certain percentage of the buying public to feel that one should be suspicious of a tradesman's " selling talk." This is perhaps a reason why there are so many retail salesmen who use practically no

" selling talk," even after they have " sized up " a customer to their satisfaction.

In my own case, I have an ingrained distrust of what druggists say about their wares, although reason reassures me that the druggist's assertion that he has " something just as good " is probably, in most cases, fully justified by the facts. The magazines have told us enough about patent medicines to convince us, I think, that the apothecary is frequently warranted in saying he has " something just as good " when patrons ask for proprietary remedies. The druggist is a professional man, who has a scientific knowledge of much of the merchandise he sells, and is scarcely to be blamed for his disposition to substitute his own less costly and more profitable concoction for an advertised nostrum. It has been my experience that druggists rarely suggest a substitute for a truly meritorious advertised article, but notwithstanding this, I am almost invariably distrustful of a druggist's advice. However, I am not

similarly suspicious of the advice of other merchants, although most of them appear to think I am, and seem to be reluctant to advise me about their goods except in the hackneyed phrases of commendation which the law says are not fraudulent, even though applied to the most worthless article. If I am a merchant, the law lets me say: "These are good goods," no matter how inferior the goods may be, but when my untruthfulness takes a more specific form, I am likely to get into trouble. In selling worthy merchandise, the average retail salesman does not say a great deal more than the law would permit him to say about unworthy merchandise. That is one of the principal discouragements which attend the manufacture of really fine merchandise. It is also one of the principal reasons why the magazines carry so much advertising. The advertising solicitor says to the manufacturer of a meritorious article: "Advertise in the magazines and create a demand for your goods," which is largely another way of say-

ing: "Advertise in the magazines and thus overcome the inertia, indifference, mental slothfulness and lack of imagination which are characteristic of the average retail salesman."

When the manufacturer has advertised sufficiently to get the public to walk into the retail merchant's store and demand the manufacturer's goods, the merchant will ordinarily try to meet the demand and will say that he is thus giving "service." In advance of that time, the small merchant too frequently says: "I know you make good goods, but there isn't enough demand yet to justify me in carrying your line." Many small merchants do not realize that an important phase of the "service" which a merchant should give his patrons consists in discovering and pushing new and desirable merchandise. The big merchant, on the other hand, usually does appreciate this duty to the public, and, inasmuch as we have been speaking of the X store in New York City, I might say that I

do not happen to think of any retail merchant who has been more active than Mr. X in the introduction of new and desirable merchandise, or more liberal in advertising expenditures to create a demand for it.

I am sure there are few, if any, retail merchants who have a broader conception of merchandising service than Mr. X possesses, and if it is a fact that he has a larger percentage of order-taking automatons among his sales people than some of the other New York stores, I am sure it does not result from any belief on his part that a retail merchant's function consists solely in supplying the public with the goods it *demands*. The reason must be searched for elsewhere.

Possibly the employment department has standards of selection which tend to exclude the type of salesman who has temperament and imagination.

Possibly the persons who teach salesmanship to X employees have, consciously or unconsciously, emphasized the mechanics of

retail salesmanship and subordinated the principles of salesmanship.

Possibly, as previously suggested, the advertising of the X store is so enticing that a majority of its customers are sold before they enter the store, with the result that the sales people do not get sufficient practice in salesmanship.

Possibly it is a combination of all three causes, plus another cause that, from my knowledge of Mr. X, I can well believe might have an influence on the policy of his store towards its employees. I don't believe that he would ever abandon the idea of creating something worth while from any man or woman who seemed to be willing to make good. Even though a salesman appeared to get very little benefit from the instruction which he received, I can imagine that Mr. X would be inclined to give him another chance, and still another and another. Somehow I can't imagine Mr. X " firing " anybody who is honest, decent and industrious.

At the risk of obscuring my theme, I have digressed into a somewhat extended discussion of the quality of salesmanship practiced at this New York store, for the purpose of suggesting, if not actually illustrating, how difficult it is to teach good salesmanship to every member of a large sales force. You can successfully teach arithmetic to a large group of people. When you say to an arithmetic class that six times six are thirty-six, your pupils accept your statement without making the mental reservation that sometimes six times six are sixty-six. It is comparatively easy to teach any subject which permits immediate and convincing proof of every true statement that you make, but your difficulty grows as you progress into subjects that offer an opportunity for a difference of opinion. Such difficulties reach their peak in teaching salesmanship. Every retail salesman has occasion to buy various articles at retail for his own personal use and, unless he has a deep interest in the subject of sales-

manship, is likely to be annoyed if he feels that a strange salesman is giving him " the work," or a " canned sales talk," or whatever he calls a carefully thought-out selling talk. He feels a good deal as Billy Sunday would probably feel if some other Evangelist mistook him for a sinful " cuss " and tried to convert him.

The salesman relates such an episode to his sister at the dinner table that evening, and remarks: " You'd think he'd a had enough gumption not to size me up for a boob, wouldn't you? "

Then, perhaps, sister tells about a " gabby " saleswoman who got on her nerves that afternoon and gave her a headache.

" Ain't it a fright," they both agree, " this hot air you get from these people who think they can talk you into buying something whether you want it or not? They don't know how to size up a customer. They don't know when to talk and when to keep quiet."

The retail salesman, like most of us, is

prone to base broad general conclusions on his own private opinions, without taking into account the fact that his opinion may not, for various reasons, coincide with the general public's opinion. He forgets that his estimate of another salesman's methods, when directed against himself, may be tinctured with professional jealousy and accordingly that the effect produced on him is perhaps very different than the effect produced on the average person. He forgets that sister may not have been entirely sincere in her shopping expedition that afternoon and that possibly her criticism of the "gabby" saleswoman had its inspiration in his own recital and is merely a comforting justification to herself of her non-purchase of an article which she had no intention of buying, nor any ability to pay for if she had bought it. But, most of all, he is likely to overlook the fact that the "selling talk" which he resented was a poor selling talk, or poorly made, or both, and that it does not justify the con-

"AIN'T IT A FRIGHT, THIS HOT AIR YOU GET FROM THESE PEOPLE"

demnation of a good selling talk when properly presented.

I talk to and with retail salesmen a good deal. Almost always they agree with what I suggest, except that they generally include this reservation: " That will work with a good many people, but it won't work with everybody."

" If it works with a large majority, what do we need to care if it doesn't work with everyone? " is usually what I say in reply.

Almost invariably the retail salesman, or salesmen, will argue in effect: " Why not size up every customer and use your method where I think it will work and some different method where I think it won't work? "

This is the point at which I frequently go up in the air. I'm afraid I haven't the patience to be a good teacher.

It is all so obvious to me. Success in life is based on percentages. If you have a method that is successful seventy-five per cent. of the time, you don't need to worry a

great deal about the tweny-five per cent. of non-successes. At any rate, it is certainly better to have a seventy-five per cent. plan than to have no plan at all, although you should try constantly to increase the percentage of successes.

Take the confidence man as an example. He is a salesman, although he sells nothing for something. He not only uses practically the same method with every victim, but practically every confidence man uses practically the same method as every other confidence man. In other words, " the sick engineer " game, " the green goods " game, " the wire tapping " game, " the gold brick " game, " the dealer's revenge " game, " the lost diamond " game, " the two royal flushes " game, " the double cross " game and all the other games are accompanied by a " standard " line of talk, wherever they are worked and by whomever they are worked. The confidence man in El Paso uses the same methods as the confidence man in Bangor, Maine. Their

methods of procedure are based on the confidence man's traditional estimate of the greed and gullibility of the average man. They fail frequently, but they succeed often enough to leave the percentage in the confidence man's favor.

I do not regard salesmanship as a form of confidence game. On the contrary, I believe that the first element of good salesmanship is absolute honesty, but I cannot refrain from contrasting with a confidence man the honest salesman of an honest article, at an honest price, who hangs back and tries to size up his customer, and not infrequently decides that the customer has no intention of buying and that consequently it is not worth while to make any serious effort to sell him. I can't refrain from comparing such a salesman with the confidence man who says: "I don't care who he is, or what he is; if he's got the money, I'll try to hook him with the same old line of talk."

A confidence man once said to me: "I've

only got one method. You can't have a lot of different methods and have 'em all down pat enough to get over with your *'customer.'* You'd get mixed up and lose your punch, if you had three or four different lines of talk.

"Don't I talk differently to different types of people? Well, of course, I don't swear when I speak to a church deacon, or talk fast to a slow man, or talk slowly to a quick man, or sing 'God Save the King' to a Dublin man, but outside of a few little things like that, my line of talk is pretty much the same for everybody."

The things which the confidence man called "a few little things like that" are the trivial details of salesmanship which prevent so many alleged salesmen from becoming more than mere order takers. They flounder around trying to size people up or "read character," and overlook the vital fact that pickpockets and preachers, artists and arti-

sans are the same in ninety per cent. of their thoughts and impulses, and that the ten per cent. of difference is usually not of great concern to a salesman.

For a salesman to say that he has to size up his prospective customer before he knows what to say is no more reasonable than it would be for the actors in a play to have several fundamentally different versions of the play and decide what version of it to present, after they had looked through the peephole at the audience. The comedian may have a few *ad lib.* gags, which he changes according to the character of his audience, or the locality in which he is playing, but his changes have about as much relative importance to the success or non-success of the play as a salesman's variation of his sales talk, according to his estimate of his customer, has to his success as a salesman.

The salesman who imagines that he varies his sales talks and sales methods according

to his estimate of the customer with whom he is dealing, usually doesn't really do it. He only thinks he does it. I have recently proved this in the case of a salesman who resolutely refuses to adopt a uniform method, because he says he has several methods and must have an opportunity to size up his customer before he can decide which method to use. As a matter of curiosity, I had people of widely different types "shop" this salesman and their reports of his approach and subsequent sales talk are almost identical. Neither his approach nor his sales talk is good, for the simple reason that, while both are always practically the same, he hasn't studied and perfected them, as he would do if he could be brought to realize that he really uses practically the same method with every customer, up to the point of attempting to close the sale. At the closing point, I admit that the salesman's methods must frequently vary. Different people have different reasons for their reluctance to give their orders. At that

stage of a sale, the salesman must adapt his remarks to the circumstances of the particular case in hand, so far as those circumstances are revealed to him. This is almost too obvious to require comment.

One of the most frequent terms of condemnation applied to an unsuccessful salesman is that he is a " poor closer." I have frequently heard it said that " So and So is a good salesman up to the point of closing, but he doesn't know how to close a sale." I have never known a salesman who was good up to the point of closing but wasn't a good closer. Furthermore, I have never known a poor closer who wasn't also a poor beginner. I'm not a great believer in adages, but I do believe that the adage, " Well begun is half done," is a very great truth when applied to salesmanship.

If I were starting out again to learn to be a salesman I would develop a good approach before I tried to learn anything else about salesmanship, and I would estimate

the soundness of my method of approaching my customers by my success in engaging their undivided interest in the article I was trying to sell. Approach is something more than a salutation. It should go farther than that. A good approach involves the necessity of stimulating your customer's friendly interest in the article you hope to sell him. That sounds rather academic, but you can probably give it a very practical application to your own problems, if you try hard enough.

A moment ago I thought I had ended this chapter, but I find that I have left suspended in the air, as it were, at the Waldorf-Astoria the several gentlemen who sought positions as traveling salesmen and claimed to have a thorough knowledge of psychology. Not for worlds would I have you think that I am prejudiced against a psychologist. It is only when he is also a character reader that I am prejudiced against him. I don't believe in character-reading salesmen. My experience

has been that character-reading is more frequently an alibi for not getting an order than an aid to getting one. I don't know of anything that irritates me more than a salesman's report to this effect: "The minute I saw him, I sized him up and knew there was no chance to do anything with him."

APPROACH

I AM going to quote in its entirety a letter from a New York retail salesman. First of all, this letter contributes the best tip on salesmanship that anyone can give you; second, it asks a question which every thoughtful and ambitious salesman is continually submitting to himself: "How can I improve my approach?"

I've been a salesman in a retail store for the last five months. After about two months of my experience in this store I learned (using your expression) how to "size up a customer." Since then I practiced this "sizing up of customers" and found that I sold to thirty per cent. of the customers that I handled. At first I thought this pretty good, but finally began to think that the increase in percentage of sales did not keep step with the experience I was gaining all the time. I gave the matter so much thought that in the end I decided my system of reading a customer's character was not as good as it possibly could be. Trying to find different systems did not help, and in the end it struck me that there were only two systems, either

to "size him up" or not to (size him up). This was about three days previous to the reading of one of your articles. Having tried the first way for the last few months, I decided to try the other, and, coupled with the determination to sell to every customer, I've found it working splendidly. Within the last three days I've sold to eight out of the nine customers that I waited on. One of these eight admitted afterwards that he had only come into the store with the intention of pricing the article, and to two of the remaining seven, not having what they asked for, I sold entirely different articles.

On reading your article I thought it quite a coincidence to read about the things uppermost in my mind at the time, and I can't help expressing my admiration after reading it.

There's one thing, though, which I don't, but would like to understand very much, and that is about developing a good approach. I would be very much obliged to you if you could in some way, so it can reach me (and I think it would interest many other readers of your articles) explain in detail, exactly what you mean.

This young man has mastered one of the most important truths of salesmanship. Speaking in an extremely broad sense, there

are two general systems of retail salesmanship. One is to " size up " each prospective customer and gauge your efforts accordingly; the other is to " size up " no one, but to do your utmost to sell everyone. The latter system gets the money in the long run. It took this young man only five months to discover this fact. I know of salesmen who have not learned as much in thirty years of sales experience.

He asks me to tell him how to develop a good approach. As stated in the previous chapter, approach is partly salutation and partly an introduction of your goods in a way that will stimulate the interest of your prospect. As our New York friend has not told us what kind of goods he sells, it is necessary, in essaying an answer to his question, to speak chiefly of approach as a form of salutation, which, perhaps, is its most important aspect in those cases where the potential customer visits a store or sample room to look at goods.

The best approach a retail salesman can use, when an unknown visitor enters his store, consists of a pleasant smile and a courteous good morning, or good afternoon. But many salesmen smirk when they think they are smiling, and others mistake servility for courtesy. There must be sincerity in your manner. If you are a retail salesman—or saleswoman—you are not properly tuned up to your job until you regard every visitor to your store as a welcome guest and habitually endeavor to make all shoppers realize that fact by your reception of them. You can't merely pretend to feel that way about the people who come to the store; you must actually feel it. In my opinion, one of the first things a retail salesman should do is to develop the right mental attitude toward the customers of his store. He should learn to think of them as friends, so that his greeting of each customer will instinctively be a genuinely friendly one. When you join a fraternal organization, you adopt toward its

members a relationship based on the assumption of mutual tastes and interests. You feel at least a little closer to your lodge brethren than to the average member of the general public, and accordingly you put a little more friendliness into your salutation of a lodge brother. Every prospective customer who enters your store should mean more to you in a material sense than any of your fellow lodge members. Your lodge may help bury you, if necessary, but the customers of your store are helping to keep you alive and are offering you daily opportunities to improve your condition in life. The people who visit your store, even when they have no immediate intention of buying, are good friends of yours, although they may never have heard of you. Therefore, you should think of them as friends and you should greet them as friends.

Now how do you greet your friends? I know a man who has scarcely any close friends, for the simple reason that he doesn't

know how to say "How do you do." The way he says it makes that friendly salutation sound almost like an insult. He appears to grudge the words and the effort of uttering them. He is entirely unconscious of this fault, and I am sure he could easily correct it. Have you a defect in the way you say "Good morning" to a prospective customer? Do you say it perfunctorily as a thing that has to be said, but doesn't mean anything? If so, your approach is bad, and it's up to you to put some real stuff into the words. I know a man who draws $25,000 a year, principally because he learned the right way to say "Good morning" and "Good afternoon"; and he would say it to J. P. Morgan in just the same way as he said it to Tony the boot-black. He wasn't afraid to say "Good morning" to Mr. Morgan, and he wasn't ashamed to say "Good morning" to Tony.

Do you know how to smile? Is your smile merely a muscular contortion, or do you make it mean something. Your eyes should

smile. Do they? I wonder if you have a dog friend—a dog which really likes you? If you have, look at his eyes the next time he greets you and you will know what I mean. It would seem that anyone could learn to smile as well as a dog, but lots of people don't do it. A dog, however, has an advantage over human beings in that his heart is always right toward his friends. He is almost never too busy, too tired, too hungry or too ill to smile with his eyes at his friends. If we salesmen would cultivate that attitude with reference to all of our customers, I am sure it would improve our approach.

I may not know you and you may not know me, but if I say " Good morning " to you as if I really mean it, and smile at you as if I am truly glad to see you and intend to place myself entirely at your disposal, I am putting the emphasis on the *you,* where it always belongs in salesmanship. It doesn't matter whether you are a millionaire or a chimney sweep, you will appreciate the fact

that I am interested in you and anxious to do everything that I can for you. If I am a salesman and you come to my store, it would, of course, be unpardonable for me immediately to ask you what you want, just as it would be almost unforgivable in me to ask you that question if you were my friend and called at my home to pay me a social visit. Let me emphasize that the people who come to your store are your guests, and that they should be treated as guests. Don't ask a customer what he wants or what you can do for him. Show by your greeting that you are at his service, give him a chance to tell you what he wants and then demonstrate by your cheerful alacrity that it is a real pleasure to you to get the article for him.

If you know a customer's name, you naturally have an advantage when you approach him. Do you try to remember names? Probably not; likely enough you are one of those who almost boast that they "can remember faces, but can't remember

names." If you don't remember names it doesn't do you much good to remember faces. You can learn to remember names—a good many names at least. I am acquainted with a former hotel clerk who became the proprietor of a large hotel because he cultivated the faculty of remembering names.

But suppose you don't know a customer's name; is there anything you should say or do except to smile and say good morning or good afternoon? That depends on you, your customer, and the kind of store in which you work. I know a small shop keeper who, on a rainy day, will take a customer's umbrella, shake it carefully and return it in such a way that he seems to have performed a very useful service. That, of course, would not work in a large store, but always there are ways of demonstrating your desire and readiness to be of service. If you are behind a counter, you can move something on the show case with an air which implies that everything has been dismissed from your thoughts except

your desire to be of service to the customer who stands before you. While you are performing this operation be sure to look at your customer, else he may think you are "tidying up" and neglecting him. Don't prolong the operation. It should be instantaneous and preferably while you are smiling and saying "Good morning" or "Good afternoon."

If you are in a department where chairs are provided for customers, you should offer a chair to your prospective customer, unless he manifests great haste. Most salesmen seem to take it for granted that people know what chairs are for and that it is not necessary to offer a particular chair when plenty are in sight. Here again we must remember that a customer is a guest and that the good host offers a particular seat to his guest and may even recommend its comfort.

It is needless for me to go on multiplying examples of how to develop effective touches of hospitable courtesy in your approach of

visitors to your store. You can do the thing easily enough, if you feel real friendliness for the customers of your store.

I am moved to touch on one very common fault of retail salesmen and saleswomen. The average salesman, if waiting on one customer, when a second approaches, seems disposed either to ignore the second customer entirely or else to greet him in a way which makes the first customer feel that he is being hurried. For such situations the salesman should have a smiling but silent salutation, to be followed later—when the first customer is disposed of—by the usual spoken salutation. Girls are ordinarily better at this than men. They can put more significance into a look or a nod than a man can—unless he happens to be an actor. I think this is probably due to the fact that girls and actors use their mirrors a good deal. Perhaps it wouldn't harm salesmen if they used their mirrors to see how they look when they nod and smile.

When the customer comes to the salesman it is not always necessary that the approach be more than an effective salutation, but usually it is desirable to make some comment about the goods the very instant the shopper has told you what kind of article he desires to inspect. This comment should make him feel that his visit has been well timed, or that his inquiry denotes discrimination, or that you have something out of the ordinary to show him. For example, such remarks as these, when truthful and appropriate, help to round out your approach: "You're just in time; there's still a good selection, but they're going fast," or "We've just received a brand new lot," or "Those are wonderful goods, aren't they?" or "I think I have a pleasant surprise in store for you; let us see if I haven't."

When the salesman goes to his prospective customer, as distinguished from his customer coming to him, it is absolutely *necessary* that his approach, in addition to embodying the

essentials of a good salutation, should also intrigue the interest of the customer in the salesman's firm, or goods—or both.

SELLING GREEN COFFEE

An experienced coffee salesman propounds this perplexing problem: "I am selling green coffee to the large trade. I have the same thing to offer as has the other fellow, and his prices and mine are based on the same market, same grade of goods, same system of doing business—nothing but a great sameness all the way through. Buyers know that. Assume that you are one of these buyers and I am trying to sell you for the first time. You are a man who will draw into the cup and select your own goods. You will not be talked into anything you are not sure about. You are in the market, say, for two hundred bags of green Santos of a certain grade. You will have three or four coffee houses submit their samples and prices. You will test the samples and compare the prices, and satisfy yourself as to the best values. Other things being equal, you will be inclined to favor a house or a salesman with whom you are acquainted. My goods and prices prove to be all right, but perhaps no better than those of one or more of the other fellows. You have never done business with my house, although you know them

to have a first-class reputation. I am an entire stranger to you. How should I approach you, if I expect to get your business the first time I make a bid for it?"

Assume that your coffee, prices and terms are no better than the other fellow's, is there not some element of service, or some characteristic practice of your house, with which you could excite my curiosity?

How would it do for you to say to me something like this: "Recently I have been wondering why my house has never been able to sell you, and I thought I'd come in to-day and ask you about it. Is it their fault? Is there some reason why you do not care to do business with them?"

Very possibly this would put me on the defensive to the extent that I would say that I hold your house in the highest esteem, but patronize other concerns because I have been dealing with them for years and do not feel that I have any justification for changing.

Such a statement by me would give you an opportunity to remark: " I'm certainly glad to know that nothing has ever happened to prejudice you against my people. I think they're pretty nearly the whitest people in the business, and it worried me to think that a concern like yours might have it in for them. Now it may be that we can't give you any better service than these other people, but I've got an idea we can." At this point you could briefly describe whatever points of superiority your house possesses and then you might go on to say: " I wish you would give me a chance to demonstrate just how we would handle an order. If you find that you don't like our methods enough better than the other fellow's to justify you in giving us a share of your business, no harm will have been done. As a matter of fact, you may get better service from the other fellows on future orders if you place a trial order with us now. I'll say to you frankly that we'd like to have your name on our books

once anyway. If we can't keep you as a regular customer—that will be our fault, not yours."

I think the foregoing might possibly be a good approach in view of the conditions outlined. At least, it has the virtue of putting the emphasis where it belongs, namely, on the buyer. So long as you keep the buyer in the picture, you are pretty certain to keep his interest alive. Too many salesmen talk tiresomely about their goods and treat the buyer solely as a listener. He should invariably be made a character in the story the salesman has to tell. The buyer likes to hear you talk about himself; therefore, always put him in the foreground of every word picture that you draw.

HOW NOT TO DO IT

I am indebted to a gentleman from Elkhart, Indiana, for an excellent example of the approach a traveling salesman should not use. I quote his letter entire:

THE TRAINING FO A SALESMAN

I have never had any experience in salesmanship, but as my regular occupation is likely to come to an end owing to war conditions and as I am thinking of taking up the position of a traveling salesman, I can appreciate the importance of a good approach, and I think it would be very helpful if you would give me a few specimen dialogues, varied to suit different kinds of merchandise and prospective buyers. My idea of it is something like this:

Traveling salesman (to clerk)—"Good morning, I should like to see the proprietor."

Clerk—"That's him over by the desk."

T. S. (to hardware merchant, a stocky looking fellow in shirt sleeves)—"Good morning, Mr. ———. I am representing ———. We carry all lines of goods of such and such nature. If you are not too busy I should like to show you a few of the special things we have."

H. M.—"Well, let's see what you have got."

T. S.—"We have been selling a good many of these lately."

H. M.—"Got a gross of them on the shelf—no call for them at all."

T. S.—"Well, it is sometimes hard to introduce them at first. Now, here is another tool. It does ——"

H. M.—"We have very little call for anything except the regular staple lines."

TRAVELING SALESMAN (TO CLERK)—"GOOD MORNING, I SHOULD LIKE TO SEE THE PROPRIETOR"
CLERK—"THAT'S HIM OVER BY THE DESK"

T. S.—"We carry everything. We know your rating, Mr. ———, and we would like to do a little business with you. You must be always wanting ———. If you could give us a trial order, I am sure it won't be our fault if we can't satisfy you, etc., etc."

I have no doubt that with your experience you could give a better line of talk than the above, and it would be interesting to have some samples of the kind of rejoinders best calculated to overcome the "nothing doing" attitude which is, I suppose, the greatest difficulty to be anticipated.

In the first place, it is a mistake to treat a clerk as if he were an office boy. When you enter a small store, such as our Elkhart reader evidently had in mind, and you are approached by a clerk, engage him in conversation and try to make a friend of him. On your way back to the boss's desk, endeavor to leave a trail of friends behind you and incidentally gather some useful information as you go. In a big store, if there is no house rule or prejudice against the practice, pay your respects to the sales people in the department where your class of goods is sold

before you go to the buyer's office. The information you gain from the sales people may enable you to avoid the catastrophe of offering as your attention getter a type of merchandise on which the buyer is already overstocked. Don't start in by telling him about your house. Smile, shake hands, and say something pleasant; then hand him the article you have selected to use in making your approach. Be sure to get him to take and hold the thing in his hands. Then say to him something like this: "What do you think of that? Isn't that a peach? You know how to sell a good thing; we know how to make it. Is there any reason why your sales force couldn't make a killing with that piece of goods?"

Keep after the buyer with this last question until a sense of pride makes him admit—or assert—that his sales people could sell the article if he wanted them to do so. When he has admitted that much, you have an opening.

I believe that the philosophy of this character of approach will be clear to any salesman, and I am sure the Elkhart gentleman will have no difficulty in adapting it to whatever line of goods he undertakes to sell. Here's hoping that he may have much success.

I have the following letter from Iowa:

I am a retail automobile salesman employed by a leading concern in a city of 38,000 inhabitants, selling two lines of cars, one listing at $885.00, the other at $1950.00 for open models, and prices running as high as $3500.00 for enclosed models.

Our city is situated in a rich farming district, so we sell both to city folks and to farmers. In view of our wide range of price and various classes of customers, I would like to submit this problem:

I approach all classes of men, the wealthy successful manufacturer or merchant, the successful professional man, the well-paid mechanic, the wealthy landowner and farmer, and the renter on the farm who needs a moderate priced car to bring him closer to town. One is buying purely a luxury, another a semi-luxury, and yet another, a necessity. One calls at our salesroom and makes known his wants; in another

case you learn of his wants through a friend, and again, you call upon your man without any idea as to his needs, his thoughts or his ability to buy.

Tell me, can a salesman have anywhere near a set approach for all these conditions? Is it not almost necessary that he size up his customer in a few seconds upon the first interview, to secure the proper hearing?

I would be pleased to hear from you personally, also to see further articles on salesmanship, and especially this particular phase of it.

I am sure this Iowa automobile salesman has heard the story of the negro who was asked by another negro to lend the latter five dollars, and replied: "Brother, I ain't had five dollahs in five years, but I certainly appreciates the compliment."

I think an Iowa tenant farmer would appreciate the compliment of being canvassed on a $3500 automobile, and it wouldn't be bad salesmanship, either, provided the salesman left the way open to come down to a cheaper car gracefully. The other day I entered a Fifth Avenue store to purchase a cane. The salesman showed me a stick of

some rare wood that was priced at $25. When I protested at the price, he remarked: "*You* want a stick for real service, don't you? Here is one at $5 that will stand rough usage better than the $25 stick."

I bought the $5 cane. If the salesman had sized me up from my somewhat unkempt appearance and showed me the $5 cane at the outset, I should probably have bought a $3 stick.

To my mind there is a hint in our Iowa friend's letter that he is a trifle too quick on the trigger. He seems to feel that he must be able to say to a prospective customer: "I know just what you want."

I think it would be better to say: "I don't suppose there is a man, woman or child in the United States who hasn't thought about owning a car. I don't believe there is anyone who hasn't at least thought how big and how fast a car he would like to have, what color he would want it to be, and what he would do with it. If you were going to buy a car this

year, what would you want it to be like and what would you want it to do?"

I don't claim that the foregoing is a good approach. I merely suggest that in some circumstances it may be better than an attempt to tell a stranger what he wants.

Needless to say, a prospective customer's occupation, the location of his residence and the extent of his financial means, if known, are leads that should be utilized by an automobile salesman in planning his approach, but to make intelligent use of such information is quite different from the scatterbrained "sizing up" process which many salesmen fatuously believe they can successfully apply to any one at first sight.

If the writer of the following letter had a body as strong as his spirit apparently is, there is no telling what heights of success he could achieve:

I would like to know if you could give me any valuable suggestions on salesmanship.

On account of poor health I can work but little now.

While I can, I take orders for books and have sold toilet articles, specialties, soaps, etc.

I have been sick and sickly for over five years now—had appendicitis, two operations, pleurisy, malaria, nervousness, and rheumatism—and am now in a debilitated condition, and the doctor says I have neurasthenia.

I have had two years of high school besides a great deal of outside reading. I finished common school five years ago this spring. This is the third year since then that I have had to miss school; otherwise I should have finished last year. Am now 16 years, 11 months old, weigh 78 pounds and my height is about five feet.

I began taking orders for war books and other books about three weeks ago, working part time—55 orders for the war book I am selling.

My dear boy, the first thing for you to do is to get well. Go to your doctor and tell him that you are determined to conquer the ills of your body. Evidently you require something more than medicine. Perhaps the thing you need is an outdoor life, free from the nervous strain that book canvassing imposes on one of your temperament. Light

work on the farm of some big-hearted farmer who sets a good table may be the solution of your problem. Possibly you need a different climate. Tell your doctor you want him to select a vocation for you that will make you well. Get well, and I am pretty sure you can make a big success in life.

OVERCOMING A CUSTOMER'S INDIFFERENCE

FROM Minnesota came the following letter:

For a long time I believed myself to be a poor closer. Where I got that impression I do not know, but it remained with me a long time. All I have to say now, is give me a good start and the closing will take care of itself.

I do have some little trouble, however, in making myself at ease with two classes of prospect. One class is those who won't say anything, or but very little, in response to my talking; the kind of prospect who silently admits, or seems to admit, the arguments I make, but who still remains apparently unmoved. The other is the man who expressly concedes the desirability of the product I am selling and its superiority over other similar products, but will not attentively listen or respond to selling talk that he thinks might influence him to own such a product. If there are any ways to pry open clams of this sort I'd like very much to know of such ways, and if you have any to suggest and can

find time to write me of them, I shall certainly feel deeply indebted to you for the time and attention you have given me.

Thanking you for your attention, and hoping that I may have the pleasure of reading more of your interesting and instructive writings, I am

The young man who wrote the foregoing is now in Uncle Sam's uniform. I hope this book will get through to him wherever he chances to be. His letter propounds a problem that is encountered by lawyers and clergymen as well as by salesmen. I was once told by a clergyman of evangelistic gifts that "it is hard to convert a complacent man," and I know that a juror, who gives no sign either of accord with, or dissent to, any of the arguments presented, is usually a source of irritation to trial lawyers.

Perhaps it will be worth while to consider how evangelists and lawyers deal with the abnormally complacent man, particularly as they seem to have more systematic and scientific methods of opening a clam than those practiced by the average salesman.

What makes a man act like a clam? There are various causes. He may be silent solely because he is too stupid to be otherwise, or he may be purposefully silent because he is conscious of his mental limitations and finds silence his safest sanctuary, or he may be an evasive sort of person, who agrees with you on inconsequential points, but dodges the issue when you seek decisive action on the main question. Of course, there is also the grouch, but he doesn't matter much, as grouches cut very little figure at any time in anything.

To be a clam successfully, one must maintain an impersonal attitude of detached disinterest. The moment you make a clam the central figure in a picture which you draw for his benefit, and cause him to think of himself as the possible beneficiary or victim of the circumstances you describe, that very instant he ceases to be a clam. The transformation may not manifest itself in words, but it has occurred, and you will be able

to reap the results of its occurrence if you proceed properly.

Recently I saw an editorial in which William Sunday was characterized as a man who had dramatized vulgarity. That is scarcely fair to Mr. Sunday. He does not dramatize vulgarity. He dramatizes the hopes and fears of his audiences. If his dramatization is vulgar, it is because most of the members of his audiences are vulgar. Many of the people to whom he speaks are clams—stupid clams, or self-repressive clams, or smooth, evasive clams. Billy Sunday shocks and scares these clams until they open up their minds. He holds each member of his audience over the searing fires of hell and seemingly tries to make each of them feel an individual consciousness of fear. When he has done that, he renders it easy for them to "hit the trail." If he fails to use a few paid "boosters" to start the processions, he is overlooking an obviously effective aid, but even if he doesn't use boosters,

he nevertheless makes the trail to the mourner's bench the easiest way for the newly opened clams to express their new-found and acutely-felt realization of their sinful shortcomings. In other words, Sunday preaches personal sermons that open human clams.

Likewise, the skilful trial lawyer, who observes a juror of apathetic or unfriendly attitude, will usually try to get such juror to feel a personal interest in the case, and in particular will endeavor to make the juror contemplate himself as standing in the shoes of the lawyer's client, beset by all the intrigues and double dealings which the lawyer ascribes to his opponents. How familiar is the brand of forensic oratory wherein the eloquent advocate, after pausing to inhale a deep breath, says in full-throated tones: "Gentlemen of the jury, I ask you what you would have done, had you been situated as my client was. I ask *you!* and I ask *you!!* and I ask *you!!!*" He seems to ask every man in the jury box, but the emphasis of his

final pause rests on the juror of whom he is afraid—the clam juror—the one whom he wishes to bring to life, no matter what the consequences may be.

How can a salesman use the methods of an evangelist or lawyer in opening a clam? First of all, the salesman must have gained the attention of his clam. The evangelist and lawyer invariably get a clam's attention before they attempt to open him. Too frequently, however, the salesman tries to open a clam when the clam is thinking of something else. For every salesman who is too slow there are a hundred who are too fast. It pays to be quick and adept in showing or demonstrating goods, but a salesman should not use his heaviest selling talk until he feels confident his prospect is ready to absorb it. When a prospect gives tacit assent, without appearing to be convinced, it doesn't necessarily follow that he is a simon-pure clam. But whatever he is, you must open his mind before you can reasonably expect to sell him.

Assume that you are dealing with a clam, how are you going to open him? There is no infallible general rule for this, any more than there is a general and infallible rule for anything else. However, we may be able to develop a useful principle of more or less general application. Let us suppose your clam to be the particular kind of clam that seems to admit the truth of what you say, but steadfastly maintains an attitude which is silently expressive of that disconcerting question, "What of it?"

Long before the world at large became familiar with such phrases as "Add up your talk," or "Yes, yes, go on," or "Where do you get that stuff?" there were people who would listen to your best narrative or most convincing argument, and then say, "What of it?" with the subtly distorted emphasis that places the shameful brand of slang upon the purest of words. "What of it?" has gone out of use as a vocal slang expression, but there are hundreds of thousands who con-

tinue to use it in pantomime—who slang you by their silence. To be slanged silently is one of the most trying experiences a salesman can have. How is it to be avoided?

I have a friend who is unconsciously self-centered. It is quite possible that you could rush into his office and shout: "Your house is on fire," without immediately arousing his determination to make all haste to the scene of the fire. However, if you first said to him, "Do you own that house where you live?" and then told him that the house was burning, he would instantly seize his hat and rush away. If you asked him: "Is U. S. Steel Common a good buy?" he would probably make an indifferent answer, but if you first said to him: "Are you doing anything in the stock market at present?" and then asked him what he thought of Steel Common, he would almost certainly give you a complete and sincere expression of his views.

Do these distinctions seem elusive? They really are not. To bring this particular man

out of his shell quickly and get him instantly into a responsive frame of mind, it is usually necessary to invoke thoughts that revolve around himself exclusively. Merely to inform him that his house is on fire causes him to think of his family, the furniture, the fire department, the insurance policies, the neighbors and perhaps a dozen other things. The more things he thinks of, the slower he is to realize that he, individually, should take immediate action of some sort. On the other hand, if you first require his mind to register the thought: "Yes, that is my house," and you then tell him the house is on fire, he instantly says to himself. "It's *my* house. It is on fire. I must go there at once. Everything is up to *me*." Similarly, if you ask him whether he is in the market before you inquire what he thinks of Steel Common, his mind evolves for your benefit the same thoughts it would produce for his own benefit, if he actually had under consideration the purchase of some of the stock.

In attempting to develop a principle of procedure that will aid salesmen in opening clams, we are almost certain to find that the only way to open a clam is to make him think acutely—even painfully—of himself. In opening a clam, a salesman should not be impersonal. On the contrary, he should be just as personal as possible without giving offense.

Our Minnesota soldier reader was formerly a salesman of phonographs. When he came across a clam who neither admitted nor denied the excellence of the phonograph he was attempting to sell, how would it have done if he had said: "Do you want to be able to feel that you have given your family the best music there is—something so good that no one can have anything better? Are you willing to invest enough to get the best for your home and your family? That's what I want to know. You're the doctor; what you say goes. I simply want you to tell me whether you want the best there is."

If the clam says he wants the best, he has been pried open. From that point on he is a regular prospect and can be handled in the regular way. Even if he says he can't afford the best, he has been partly pried open, since the discussion is then on intimately personal grounds.

You can't open an unresponsive clam by impersonal talk about the desirability of possessing the best thing there is on the market. You've got to have a personal showdown with him and find out whether *he* wants the best.

In attempting to open the evasive clam, who agrees politely with what you say but displays no real conviction, how would it do to say to him: "I want you to be the judge. I want you to decide one question, and I think you will admit that it is a fair one. I want you to tell me just what you think." Then ask the question, whatever it happens to be. The chances are that the polite but evasive clam will answer the ques-

tion as the salesman desires it answered. If so, the salesman might very properly say: "That settles it; you want this, and you don't want anything else. You kept it to yourself, but I felt sure you appreciated this quality. I felt sure I couldn't be wrong about that." From this point the salesman's talk should proceed on the assumption that the clam is going to buy and that the only question is when he is going to buy. A salesman shouldn't start to make a sale to a clam until the clam's mind is open, but when the clam has opened his mind, he can ordinarily be handled in the same way as any other potential buyer.

In your efforts to open a clam, you naturally desire to avoid offending him, but in many cases you must run the risk of giving offense. A sincerely friendly way of persisting with an embarrassing question is a great aid, if not an absolute essential, to the successful opening of human clams. This qualification is one that almost any salesman

can acquire through intelligent practice, but having gained facility in opening clams, he should be careful to avoid the use of his clam-opening methods on people who are not clams.

The evangelist opens a clam by making the clam fearful about his future state. The life assurance solicitor causes the clam to picture the shamefulness of making no provision for his family against his untimely demise. The salesman endeavors to touch the clam's pride without wounding it. The same principle is used in each case and perhaps, for the purposes of salesmanship, the practice can be broadly stated thus: Instead of trying to argue with a clam, get him into an argument with himself and then go ahead and sell him.

GETTING THE ORDER

One of the most interesting letters I have ever read was written to me recently by a saleswoman of Indianapolis. There are perhaps two million retail salesmen and saleswomen in the United States. I possess no means of knowing what percentage of these retail sales people are in the habit of thinking introspectively about themselves and constructively about their daily work, but I am sure that nine-tenths of those who do so have more or less frequent experiences, wherein a failure "to close the deal" gives rise to unpleasant doubts in their own minds of their abilities as salesmen—or saleswomen. In other words, most thinking salesmen, no matter how successful they may be, have occasion sometimes to chide themselves for losing a sale, and reason to doubt if nature really intended them to be salesmen.

I am going to give you all of the Indian-

apolis letter, as every sentence seems to be pertinent. It is a letter that has what lawyers call "atmosphere." Please read it carefully:

I have read with more than passing interest your articles on salesmanship, and I am taking advantage of your offer at the end of them. To begin with, I am, or have wished to be, and have made every effort to be, a *saleswoman,* my line being coats and suits for women. My record has been very discouraging, since I have spent almost seven years at it, conscientiously trying to make a success, and in every instance, have been "let out"—kindly, but nevertheless let out—and I am at a loss to account for it. Since I am a woman, may I be pardoned if I say that I have been credited with a pleasing personality, and in no instance have I lost a position through any complaint on the part of a customer; I seem able to interest them in my line, and am, or have been (although I am at the present time filling a clerical position) very anxious to find a color and style, both of which are very important factors in selling to a woman, to suit my customer. I am able to interest them, but cannot "close the deal" often enough to justify my employer in continuing me in his service. Of course, I realize that a certain amount of training

is necessary in this line as well as in all others; but my experience in the game should have been a training, which I seem to have failed to obtain, but for what reason I am unable to state—hence this letter to you.

I wish to say, without being thought vain, that my customers are invariably kind, and seem to appreciate my efforts to please them even to the extent sometimes of complimenting me to my floor manager, or to the buyer; but that doesn't sell the goods. At times customers have presumed on my known courtesy to take up my time as well as that of my firm in looking at articles they probably have no intention of purchasing; right here let me say that there are many women who spend their leisure time in just that manner, and the word "shopping" has come to mean anything but a prospective buyer in the minds of the majority of salespeople. Of course, these women buy, some place and some time, and for that reason I have never yielded to the perfectly natural desire to slight them. As you know, most employees in that line are paid a salary and commission, and *time* means a great deal in their business, and none of it must be wasted if a salesperson is to make good with the firm or earn enough money to live on. I have had talks with many floormen, who, as a rule, are good business men, for, contrary to the common idea of a floor manager, he *must* be in that

department, at least, a keenly intelligent man, and I have had no word of censure for my work, but they agreed with me that for some season I was not a success.

I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that one must have a natural gift for selling, just as another has a natural singing voice, and that training is an adjunct, but not an absolute necessity for a salesman who has a natural aptitude for such work.

I will merely mention in passing, that I was compelled to enter the business world after many years of wedded life, which is not, to say the least, conducive to a successful career as a business woman. But the necessity arose, and with the "pleasing personality" of which I spoke in the earlier part of my letter, and on the advice of friends who were pleased to think I was especially fitted by Dame Nature to fill such a place, and for other reasons, such as the fact that the "days of my youth" were far more easily counted in the past than they could be in the future, I asked for and got, a nice position in one of the highest class stores in my city, where my training, if I had had any aptitude for that class of work, would have landed me in a much better place than I have ever been able to obtain. I have talked with one or two of my employers on this subject, for I am not easily discouraged. They

both said there was no apparent reason for my failure, and that success would come. But I came to the conclusion that seven years is long enough to wait for success, in one line, and so I made a change.

However, this change is only temporary in its nature, and I am now contemplating a return to my old business of selling ready-made garments for women; as that is my only hope for a living. I dread the plunge, because of the failure I have been, and yet I have no alternative. It is all I know how to do in business life and I am too old to train for any other line. Can you advise me as to what is wrong? I feel it *must* be me, or my customers and employers would not talk so kindly to me. If I were not willing to work and conscientious in my manner of doing it, they would not be so kind as to say things like that. On the other hand, if—well—if you can help me by telling me where my fault lies and how I can remedy it, you would certainly confer a lasting obligation on one reader who is very much concerned over the way she is going to earn her living. If you care to publish my letter, do so, but it may seem too insignificant to your trained mind to be of interest to others; but I should like very, very much to have your advice on a subject which is very vital to me at this present writing.

Hoping I have not taken up too much of your time

with my troubles, and wishing to excuse myself for doing so on the grounds that I took your offer to help too literally, perhaps, and asking your pardon for it, if that proves to be the case, I am

After reading this letter I feel very much as a physician might when he is able to assure a patient that the latter does not suffer from a suspected organic affliction.

The lady says: "I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that one must have a natural gift for selling, just as another has a natural singing voice, and that training is an adjunct but not an absolute necessity for a salesman who has a natural aptitude for such work."

In my opinion, there is no such thing as a "natural gift for selling." One may have natural gifts, which, if properly developed and utilized, will make one an exceptional salesman, but there is no such thing as a born salesman, any more than there is such a thing as a born race horse. A thoroughbred colt may be perfect physically and come from

a family of winners, but he can never be a winner without training. Left to himself, he will fail to take sufficient exercise to develop his heart, lungs and motive muscles in the manner in which they must be developed if he is to become a winner. There is no born race horse and there is no born salesman, but there is the important difference between the two that a human being can train himself, while a horse cannot. Horses have only instinct as their guide; men and women have intelligence. Good salesmanship is the product of intelligence habitually applied to the salesman's daily intercourse with his potential customers.

I can assure the lady from Indianapolis that she can become a good saleswoman. She may not achieve phenomenal success, but I am sure she has no faults that cannot be minimized to a point where she is, at least, certain of making a comfortable living as a saleswoman. I do not know her. I cannot diagnose her individual case from her

YOU FEEL AS IF YOU OUGHT TO PROPOSE MARRIAGE TO HER

letter and administer a specific remedy through the pages of this book, but I should like to address all salesmen who believe, or have been told, that they possess this strange thing, " a pleasant personality."

If you are a salesman and believe that you have a " pleasant personality," you are confronted by two perils. You may overplay your personality—or you may underplay it. In either case you think too much about yourself and not enough about your customer. I know of an apothecary shop in which is employed a good-looking girl clerk who has the kind of personality which smiles and shows its teeth and wiggles—yes, literally wiggles. When she approaches you to learn what brand of cigar you want, you feel as if you ought to propose marriage to her, if you happen to be unmarried, or, if married, that you should promise to do something for her in your will. Only yesterday I visited this place to buy three articles. I bought one, thrust it into my pocket and

escaped without the other two. The young lady put me positively into a panic. She used her personality until it hurt. Without doubt she was thinking: "How nice I am to this poor drab man. I'm treating him so much differently than most sales girls would treat that type of man. I'll bet he appreciates it."

She did treat me differently, but I didn't appreciate it. Instead, I got nervous and frightened. The young lady overplayed her personality. I wonder if our Indianapolis lady is at all like our apothecary lady. I wonder if she renders the Indianapolis dowagers, matrons and misses a trifle uncomfortable by too much personality. I notice she makes it a point to select becoming colors and styles. Does she do it tactfully, or does her personality strike a patronizing note which unpleasantly reminds the sallow woman of her yellow skin and the stout woman of her embonpoint?

If my Indianapolis lady misuses here per-

sonality, I am rather confident that she overplays it. The vividness of her letter indicates that she would not be likely to underplay anything. However, there is the barest chance that she *may* underplay her personality. A noticeably restrained personality among salesmen and saleswomen is particularly a Fifth Avenue vice, yet it is not confined solely to Fifth Avenue. Restrained personality is like a too-tightly laced corset. Neither is comfortable and neither deceives any one. The abstracted and condescending attitude of a salesman, who is conscious of his personality but has it on leash, is just as offensive and non-productive as the gushing eccentricities of a salesman who gives full swing to his personality. If you think you have a "pleasant personality," you are pretty sure to pose, and no really good salesman is a poseur. Be sincerely agreeable. Learn—before a mirror if necessary—how to greet a customer, and after that forget yourself. If you have what

you think is personality, leave all of it at home except that which you use in saying good morning or good afternoon. If you really have a pleasant personality, you will never know it. A self-conscious person cannot have a truly pleasant personality.

What has the foregoing to do with Getting the Order? Simply this: To get the order, unless the resolve to buy takes place in your customer's mind without the necessity of salesmanship on your part, you must forget yourself and adopt his viewpoint. You should endeavor to think of the article as he is thinking of it. When you attempt to intrigue his interest in a given article, you should emphasize his views—not your own. Instead of saying, " I recommend this," it is better to say, " Here is something that will please you, I think." Rather than say to madam, " Here is a color that I think you can wear," it is better to say to her: " You will like this shade, I feel quite confident."

When a salesman desires to point out the

superior qualities of his merchandise, he should respectfully indicate his conviction that his customer has the capacity for appreciative interest. Instead of glibly parroting that a bolt of silk is "the best grade of genuine Lyons silk," he might say: "As you are probably aware, over thirty per cent. of the silk looms in Lyons are idle; therefore, you will be interested to know that this is a genuine piece of Lyons silk which we succeeded in getting past the submarines. It is the very highest grade, too—but I needn't tell you that. The quality is quite apparent, isn't it?"

Intriguing and developing a customer's interest constitute a well-defined phase of salesmanship. I touch upon the subject now merely to emphasize that in every step of a sale the salesman should speak through, rather than to, the mind of the buyer. He should make every statement seem to draw upon the buyer's knowledge and express the buyer's thoughts.

That we may now progress rapidly to the ultimate phase of a sale, let us suppose that our hypothetical customer has reached a point where he—or she—really wants the article we are trying to sell. Such being the case, how do we " close the deal "? If we are good salesmen, we don't coax, we don't urge, we don't cajole. We don't say: " This will look lovely on you. I think you really should take it, before someone else gets it." If we said that, it would be a backward step; it would have a tendency to re-open a question that should be foreclosed before we make our first attempt to get the order. Here is a rule which no salesman—or saleswoman—should ever forget: Don't try to get the order until you *know* you have made your customer *want* the goods. Then go forward; never retrace your steps. Say nothing and do nothing that is not predicated on the conviction that your customer is going to take the goods and that the only question is *when*.

When is the big unspoken word in " get-

ting the order." If your customer wants an article there is almost certain to be a definite time when he desires to use it. If the article is wearing apparel, there is likely to be an occasion when his vanity urges that he parade it. If the article is household furniture there is a time when it will be particularly desired for use or display. No matter what the article is, if your customer really *wants* it, there is a more or less definite time *when* he would like to use it. In some cases you can surmise when that time is. One reason why the Christmas trade is so brisk is because retail sales people know that shoppers want goods for Christmas, and the confident assurance of the sales people helps to close sales.

It is easy to close jewelry sales in June and firecracker sales on the Fourth of July. You know your customers want the goods right away and you proceed, with supreme confidence, to get their orders. A similar confidence is helpful in closing a sale at any time.

Madam likes a suit but seems to hesitate. You might say: " You will want the suit by next Sunday, at the latest. We can manage that nicely if we get the fitter started right away. There is just enough time if we commandeer a fitter this afternoon. To be properly done, the alterations require time, and I particularly don't want this hurried. I want it to be a beautifully tailored garment."

Don't ask her if she will; just assume that she will, and say to yourself: " You're going to take it; you're going to take it. I know you're going to take it."

That is one way to get an order, whether from a woman who is pricing a new suit, or a man who is " thinking " of buying a new motor car.

I could multiply illustrations of the use of *when* in closing a sale, but I doubt if that is necessary. You can close almost any sale by the " when " formula, if you have begun the sale properly by getting your customer's undivided attention, then intrigued his in-

terest; and finally made him really want the goods. If the first three steps of a sale are effectually accomplished, the fourth—closing—is not difficult. Poor closers are invariably poor beginners.

Dear lady from Indianapolis, have you gained so much as a single thought that will aid you? If you feel that you have not, read it all again. I truly believe that your keen intelligence will extract at least one idea that may be helpful to you.

I have an interesting letter from a salesman in Paducah, Ky., and quote as follows:

I am employed by one of the largest retail clothing houses in Kentucky and probably the largest in west Kentucky. We have built up our trade chiefly with the country people, such as farmers, traders, etc. Although I have been in the retail business all my life, this is without a doubt the most difficult trade to sell I ever experienced; the reasons are, first, because they do not want to pay the price for merchandise, and although they are getting more than double their original price for their products, still they do not realize that our merchandise has advanced too. We have quite a

bit of trouble with some who do mail order business. For instance, a man came in our store the other day for a pair of boy's overalls. My price was 90 cents. He would not buy, because he said he could "send off" and get them for 79 cents. Second, if you price a suit of clothes to a "yokel" at $15 and he says, "I will give you $10," or most any price, what can any salesman do?

The problem which you describe is an important one and should be disposed of before you make your attempt to " close the deal." If your goods are right and your prices are right, you need have no fears. The farmer is a wise old owl. He appreciates values, but tobacco buyers, wheat buyers, mule buyers and others, who bargain for his products, have taught him to haggle. I can't believe that you are selling an all-wool suit for $15, but assuming that you were and that your farmer customer objected to the price and offered $10, how would it do to ask him what he paid for this same kind of suit two years ago? Suppose he answers $10. Then ask him what he was getting for corn, wheat, tobacco and mules two years ago. Next,

ask him if he has been watching the wool market. As the final clincher, tell him that you will try to get permission to sell the suit for ten dollars, if he will agree to sell you ten bushels of corn at the same price he got for his corn two years ago. Do all this pleasantly—not pugnaciously. The farmer knows that he ought to pay more for clothing now than he paid two years ago. Nevertheless he feels it his duty to protest.

When your farmer customer objects to your price of 90 cents and says that he can "send off" to a mail order house and get a pair of overalls for 79 cents, call his attention to the difference between tobacco leaf and lugs, and also remind him of the different grades of corn. Suggest that he get a pair of the 79 cent mail order overalls and have his boy wear them in comparison with a pair of your 90-cent overalls. Ask him if he doesn't think the mail order catalog is a fine piece of printing. Inquire what he thinks it costs. Ask him if he thinks a dollar

and a half for paper, printing and postage, would be too much. Suggest that some day he put this question to the local printer. Call his attention to the fact that the mail order people claim to reach millions of customers through their catalogs. Ten million customers would mean that they spend fifteen million dollars for catalogs alone; a fifteen million dollar expense before they can sell a dollar's worth of goods. Part of that is in the price of 79-cent overalls. Ask him if he really thinks the mail order houses can give better values than you can. Remind him, too, of the postage stamp and money order which he must buy, the transportation charges he must pay and the delays he must endure, if he buys from a mail order house.

Here is a letter from a Newark, N. J., clothing salesman:

I sell men's clothing at retail. Figuring the total amount of my sales I would probably be considered a successful salesman in that line. Every person coming

into the department is considered by me to be a potential buyer, even though his actions or words, upon approaching him, would indicate he is merely shopping. I give them all my best attention, and in many, many instances a man "merely looking around" has been sold, but sometimes I feel too much time has been spent with a "shopper" or a slow buyer, especially during a busy period. Now my problem is, when shall I "lay off" such a person, and how can I diplomatically urge him to make up his mind? He gives no intimation either by word or sign that he will not buy, he continues looking at the stock and asking questions. I am therefore reluctant to leave him, as he may feel he is not receiving proper attention, nor can I tell him to hurry up and make up his mind. In the meantime, I am losing a turn with some other prospective customer.

If you will give me your opinion on this question, I shall greatly appreciate it.

I should say that either the Newark man is too impatient or does not sufficiently develop a customer's interest in the one particular suit to which the customer seems most attracted. If a shopper gives no hint of his preference, I think it is good salesmanship for the salesman to select a suit which he con-

siders suitable in respect of fabric, style and color, and endeavor to center the prospect's interest on that particular suit. The desirable impression to give the potential buyer of clothing (either tailored to order or ready made) is that he has had a wide variety from which to make a selection, but that there is one fabric or suit which stands out above all others as the fabric or suit he should have. When you get your customer interested in a certain suit, the next step is to make him want it. Remember, that no matter how carelessly he is attired, or how much emphasis he may put on utility, wearing quality, cost and other practical phases of the contemplated purchase, he is really wondering how he is going to look and what his friends will think of his new suit. Within proper limitations a clothing salesman should aid his prospective customer in forming a pleasant mental picture of himself in the new suit. Don't say anything so trite as: "That color is becoming to you and the suit is a perfect fit."

Instead, say something that has a little punch in it; for example: "We've got a carload of fine clothing here, but I believe this suit is your one best bet. Color, fabric and style of tailoring—everything—seem to be exactly right for you."

Assuming that you have brought your customer to a state of mind wherein he really wants a certain suit of clothing, there is no better closing talk than our old reliable and aforesaid "when." If there are no alterations to be made, the salesman might say: "This is a Fifth Avenue fit, so there won't be any delay. I can get it out to your house to-night, I think, if I have it packed right away." After he has said that, he shouldn't recede. He shouldn't reiterate, except incidentally, the good qualities of the suit. He should proceed on the assumption that the suit is bought and that the time and place of delivery are the only remaining questions.

The time to "lay off" of a shopper is when you have tried and failed to close—or

have been unable even to develop his interest and desire to a point where it seems advisable to attempt to close. One graceful way to admit your defeat is to say: "The best test of how you will like this suit is to think the matter over for a couple of days and then come back and look at the suit again. Here's my card. I'll note the stock number on the card. When you come back, ask for me and we'll size up the suit again. If you like it then as well as you do now, you can be sure that you'll never grow tired of it."

The foregoing method, or some adaptation of it, gets rid of a customer who isn't ready to buy, and offers some chance that he may come back to you.

GOOD SALESMANSHIP BADLY DONE

A RAILROAD official, with headquarters in Boston, wrote me the following letter and a few days later scolded me for not answering it:

Dear Sir:

I read one of your recent articles and noted with much interest the various types of salesmen with whom you are familiar, and particularly a phrase which you used, concerning the "dead ones being made live ones when they go out."

I am not a salesman, and never expect to be, and possibly my writing you does not carry out your suggestion entirely, with respect to that presented in the last paragraph of your article. My only desire in writing you is to present my personal views regarding somes types of salesmen with whom I have dealt, and who possibly possess the proper traits to qualify them as 100 per cent. gainers, but who personally give me the horrors.

As far as I am concerned, they never have, and

never will sell me a nickel's worth over that which I originally intended to buy.

For example, I go into a gents' furnishing store, and ask to see, and I buy, some neckwear. In this particular store, it seems that a salesman can sell anything purchasable, and while the ties are being done up, he starts something like this:

How are you fixed for underwear?

I am all set.

Well, you want to consider that the Government is going to be responsible for your getting garments with much difficulty next year.

Yes, I am aware of that.

Could I show you some pajamas just in from Japan?

We are running a nice line of shirts. The silk ones are the last ones we expect to be able to get for some time. I would like to show them to you.

No, I have a full supply of madras shirts, which give me satisfaction.

And so he goes down the line, enumerating all the articles in the store, finally winding up with the biggest thing they carry, "a suit of clothes," and which would be the last thing I would buy in a store of that kind.

I realize that it took me much longer to write this fellow's spiel than it would for him to put it over, but please keep in mind that I am one of those people who

go into a store to purchase only what I have made up my mind to get, and after coming through my degree, which to my mind has been an embarrassing rather than a pleasurable experience, I come out very much peeved.

The salesman has not only failed in his attempts to make a sale, but in my case he has been the cause of his firm losing a customer, because of his attitude toward same.

Now, perhaps in this case I (the customer) am an exception to the general rule, and maybe could be classed with those fellows who keep saying to themselves, "I am right and the world is wrong," and that while I will not return, there may be many other converts to this system, and continue to go nowhere else.

I have made this statement many times, that if I were a salesman, I would give a customer exactly what he asked for, provided I had it, and would not solicit his patronage, of a lot of articles he never intended buying. In saying this, I realize that this system would not make it necessary to have genuine salesmen. That ordinary mechanical men could sell, and that perhaps there would be no incentive for a live one to go into the business. I have my doubts, however, that the profession would lose any of its interest, and I feel that a fellow could be a success if he carried out my

views by sticking to the delivery of the goods as asked for, instead of soliciting that uncalled for.

What do you think?

One more case is the one of going into any hat store on the change of seasons and getting up against the old hat-salesman, who has been the champion hat-salesman for his firm for years. (Hat salesmen seem to stick a long while.)

If you have been wearing a soft, wide-brimmed hat, you want a derby, and the only line they carry is very unbecoming to start with. Mr. Salesman pulls the old one, "Well, it looks strange to you because you have been wearing a soft hat. You have to get used to it." It makes no difference what the ailment is, you have to get used to it, regardless of how it looks, and it makes no difference what you have been wearing, straw, golf, felt, or soldier hat. Whatever you have on, that is the cause of your not getting acquainted with your new sky-piece.

I am 34 years old, and have been buying hats, all kinds and all sizes, since I was 15, and during this purchasing period, I have yet to find a case where I went into a hat store that the salesman did not tell me that I had to get used to the change, in order to sell his goods.

I do not think that this fellow is a salesman. He is

"IT LOOKS STRANGE TO YOU BECAUSE YOU HAVE BEEN WEARING A SOFT HAT"

an ordinary mechanical man, that can only sell goods to those to whom they are particularly adapted.

To bring this to a close, I have been a live one going in, but the salesman has made me a dead one coming out.

I like this letter, don't you? I've had the same thing happen to me and so have you. It's good salesmanship badly done.

"How are you fixed for underwear?" is a somewhat intimate question, and a good deal depends on the way it is asked. I like beefsteak and I also like eggs. There is a country hotel in Tennessee which serves deliciously tender steaks and wonderfully fresh eggs, but they have a negro waiter who robs these delightful viands of their charm by his heavy and unenthusiastic question, "How yoh want yoh stek and how'll you have your aigs cooked?"

I could have enjoyed the specialities of this house to a much greater extent if the waiter had said to me, "Boss, I got a nice tender T-bone steak for you and a couple

of fresh eggs that two young hens done laid for you today. How you want me to have the cook fix 'em up for you? "

If I were a retail salesman in a clothing store I don't think I should ask any one, " How are you fixed for underwear? " Instead, I believe I should hand out a sample garment and say, " Perhaps you've stocked up on underwear, but if you haven't here is something that is worthy of consideration."

Scarcely any man is able to avoid feeling at least a little interest in an article of merchandise that is placed in his hands. Even a crusty bachelor will take a keen, although frequently a painful, interest in a squirming baby placed in his unwilling arms.

I think that our Boston railroad official's desire to escape with his cravats, without being canvassed on underwear and other articles of male attire, is due to the fact that his interest is not easily intrigued. If retail salesmen were really able to interest him in underwear, he wouldn't complain of their

efforts in that direction. Retail salesmen should take warning that, while not every man in so difficult to interest as this Boston man, there are, nevertheless, a great many who resent, or at least are unmoved by the perfunctory questions which most retail salesmen use in their efforts to stimulate additional purchases.

As to hats and the time-worn assertion of hat salesmen that, "You have to get used to it," I must confess that one *does* have to get used to a new style of hat. I believe, however, that the salesman should select a shape which he thinks is suited to his customer and, before the hat is tried on, say something like this: "Here is a shape that I think is exactly suited to your profile. When you look in the glass, please get the side and rear views as well as the front view."

The average man doesn't see much of his profile or back and usually finds them rather interesting. If you get a man to studying his profile and the back of his head, he isn't so

likely to need to be assured that he will have "to get used" to the hat you are trying to sell him. He gets a more impersonal and consequently a less self-conscious view of himself when he looks at his profile and back. In my opinion, every hat store should have three-section mirrors that enable a customer to see himself as others see him.

DO YOU WANT TO BE RICH?

THE other day I heard two men discussing the abilities of a third man. Rather pitilessly they probed his weaknesses and ridiculed his foibles. Finally, one of them said: "Regardless, though, of what we may think of him, we've got to admit that he's *getting the money*." The other nodded his agreement and both appeared to accept that particular man's success in "getting the money" as irrefutable evidence of his ability.

There are many fields of human endeavor in which one can be eminently successful without acquiring wealth, but there is no vocation in which one can earn large sums of money without being counted successful. Money may be the root of all evil, but it is also a token of success that passes current among all civilized races.

Business is a fascinating game in which the score is marked up in dollars. The Yankee's

so-called lust for the dollar is chiefly a sporting spirit that makes him intent on piling up as large a score as possible.

Some of us, who haven't much money, may pretend that we are poor because we will not stoop to the practices by which other men grow rich. It is a current fallacy, fostered by soap-box orators, yellow journalists and political demagogues that money-making thrives in crookedness. As a matter of fact, the crooked business man is usually a poor player of the business game who can't win without breaking the rules. To want to make money is honorable, and the best methods of making money are honorable methods.

The head of a large wholesale dry-goods house in Chicago once expressed to me the opinion that an employee's ability to make money for himself in legitimate ways, without neglecting the interests of his employer, constitutes one of the most reliable indications of his executive ability. The Chicago

man said, "If an employee hasn't made money for himself, we like to know why. If he has neglected obvious opportunities to make money legitimately, we feel that he is not the type of man who should be placed in a responsible position in our organization."

Let us all admit that we want to make money. Why should we deny it? We want to make money and we desire to make it honorably, because most of us are honorable, but even if we were not, the fact remains that honorable methods are more likely to be successful than dishonorable methods.

How are we to find out how to make money? The most obvious way is to question men who have gained riches through their own efforts. That seems very simple, but really isn't. I have asked numerous rich men how they achieved financial success and they were ready enough with their answers, but, for the most part, the answers they gave left me practically no wiser than I was before.

In a certain mid-western city there is a millionaire manufacturer whose long and honorable career, if related in the proper way, would be an invaluable guide to you and me, but I can't get him to tell us what we need to know, if we are intelligently to emulate his example. He was willing to furnish information, in fact, did give me some five thousand words of it, such for example as the assertion that his success is based " on fidelity, fairness and industry," and the statement that " he is a total abstainer from drinking and smoking," but when I tried to obtain a few details that you and I could use in making millionaires of ourselves, he grew restive and said he preferred to have me write nothing at all about his career. I feel that I haven't, but I know that I should like to, as he is a fine old gentleman, who hasn't a thing in the world to conceal although, unfortunately for us, he does have his own ideas of what the world needs to know about himself.

However, there are some successful men,

who are human enough and practical enough and sufficiently free from self-consciousness to be willing to give out a little genuine " inside information." One of these is a man who used to drive a horse car in St. Louis. His name is Festus J. Wade. The Festus was fastened upon him in Limerick, Ireland, where he was born, but if I were to call him an Irishman I expect he would sue me for libel. He's proud of being born in Erin, but he's prouder still of being an American.

He has given his eighteen-year-old son to the service, and he is giving all of his own time to the nation. Also, he recently gave a tremendous " bawling out " to such of the Irish born as appear to think they can fight Germany and Great Britain at the same time. Some one told him that he would lose the bank deposits of those who do not agree with his views, and he replied, " I don't want any disloyal depositors."

But how I run on. What has all of that to do with the methods that F. J. Wade used

in making himself a millionaire? Nothing at all, unless it throws a little light on the character of this level-eyed, firm-jawed Irish-American who, to tell the truth, has rather captivated my fancy.

Wade was brought to America and St. Louis during his infancy. He got an indifferent sort of common school education—the same sort that many a modern street-car motorman now has. I forgot to find out how long he attended school, but he was only a kid when he went to work—an active and ambitious Irish kid. He got a job finally as a street-car driver and patiently piloted the raw-boned, shuffle-gaited horses, which forty years ago were the dynamos of the St. Louis traction system.

He aspired to be something else. Perhaps his aspirations had not taken very definite shape, but he knew at least that he wanted to be something different than a street-car driver. The idea of being a clerk and having clean hands and sitting at a desk seems

rather to have appealed to him, but there were not many opportunities for an uneducated Irish boy to become a clerk. Finally, however, he got the coveted chance. Back in seventy-nine, when Mr. Wade was twenty years old, the " St. Louis Fair " was an institution of international renown. The St. Louis Fair Association needed clerks from time to time, and perhaps, as is somtimes the case with semi-public organizations, was not over particular as to their fitness, so long as their employment obliged " the right people." I don't know that young Wade had to use " a pull " to land a clerkship with the fair association, but at any rate, he obtained a clerical position for which he candidly admits he was utterly unfit. Up to this point I can't see that Festus J. Wade was greatly different from thousands of other young working men who would like to obtain easier and pleasanter employment. However, having finally landed a " soft " and " clean " job, he manifested immediately a disposition

to give his employers their money's worth. He recognized that lack of education was his principal handicap and enrolled in a night school, where for three laborious years he thirstily drank in at night the knowledge that his day work demanded. At the end of three years, when Wade was twenty-three years old, The Fair Association made him its secretary. The St. Louis Fair of those days was a more ambitious kind of exposition than the ordinary State Fair of to-day. Its various departments covered almost every conceivable line of human activity and young Wade found that he needed to be a walking encyclopedia.

By now he had outgrown the night school, but he had not escaped the necessity for study. Night after night he pored over reference works and consulted the authorities which they indicated. Gradually, his untrained mind became a nicely adjusted and accurate thinking machine. Wade acquired the habit of thinking into the future. Lack

of foresight results principally from mental laziness. A man who has an active mind and orderly processes of thought is almost certain to possess foresight. If you train your mind and use it you will inevitably employ it to some extent in planning your own future. Wade's observations and reflections enabled him to picture a time when there would be no St. Louis Fair, and he determined to get into some other kind of business before that time came. Accordingly, he obtained a position as secretary of a bank-note and lithographing company. The position was a good one —dignified and well paid. In seven years he had progressed from the front platform of a St. Louis horse car to a leather upholstered swivel chair in the executive offices of a nationally known corporation. Most of us would have been satisfied with that rate of progress. We would have stuck to such a snug berth and ultimately we should have had our pretty suburban house, our fifteen hundred dollar motor car and our golf club

membership. But this young Irish-American still retained the disquieting habit of thinking ahead and he couldn't see a satisfactory future for himself as a salaried man. He wanted to have a business of his own. What business should it be? It must not require much capital and it must be something that he understood. He knew more about St. Louis than he did about any other subject and the real estate business required less operating capital than almost any other business. It seemed logical for him to become a promoter of St. Louis real estate. He decided to make the venture, but he was conscious of his own limitations. Wade wanted a couple of live wire associates, each of whom could contribute a needed element to the success of the real estate firm which he proposed to organize. At that time there were two men in St. Louis, Hammett and Anderson by name, who were leading a more or less precarious existence as real estate agents and promoters. Each had a separate

office and operated independently of the other, but between them they possessed certain qualifications that Wade believed were needed in his proposed real estate agency. He persuaded them to close their offices, liquidate their respective businesses and join forces with him. The liquidation of their affairs was not a very complicated procedure, as their combined net worth proved to be only two dollars and thirty cents, which was their contribution to the working capital of the real estate firm of Hammett, Anderson and Wade, that in less than ten years became the largest and most successful firm of its kind in the city of St. Louis.

Trust companies, like Hebrews, have a habit of going into things that look profitable. The trust companies of St. Louis began to stir uneasily and cast envious glances at Wade's real estate business. Finally, one of them decided to swallow Mr. Wade by making him a vice president. The directors offered him the position. Wade gave them

an immediate answer. He had irrevocably decided that he was always going to be his own boss. "I can't take the job," he said, "for some day I'm going to have a big trust company of my own."

At the time it was made this statement seemed a somewhat rash one, but Wade contended that it was just as easy for a real estate dealer to become a trust company as for a trust company to become a real estate dealer. Here again he had been thinking into the future. He had seen that sooner or later he would have to organize a bank and he had already made a list of the men he wanted as stockholders and directors. He wanted this man for one reason and that man for another. He got them all and in 1899, when he was forty years of age, organized The Mercantile Trust Company, a banking institution which to-day has 95,000 accounts on its books, employs 237 people and occupies the largest building in the United States devoted exclusively to banking.

How did he do it? If you don't already know, there isn't much use of my trying to tell you. This seems obvious:

First. He studied his work.

Second. He learned to think.

Third. He acquired the habit of continually thinking into the future—and acting accordingly.

Fourth. He determined to be his own boss and stuck to that determination.

Fifth. He surrounded himself with men who supplied qualities in which he believed himself to be deficient.

Do I need to say that he was honest, industrious and temperate? That much may be safely assumed, I think. Few men succeed without those qualities.

WHY EDISON HAS SUCCEEDED

I WONDER how many of you have the same mistaken impression of Thomas A. Edison that I entertained some eight years ago.

I had given no great amount of thought to the subject, but I pictured Mr. Edison as an eccentric genius, working, perhaps, on a princely salary and ostensibly a free agent in his private laboratories, but nevertheless guided and controlled by some shrewd business man who remained discreetly in the background.

Eight years ago, in the capacity of a supposed expert at sales promotion work, which distinction I now disclaim, I entered into correspondence with the president of the several corporations that manufactured and distributed the various products of the Edison Laboratories. Him I imagined to be the power behind the throne, the man who had capitalized Mr. Edison. I lunched with this gen-

tleman in New York one day, and a few days later was invited to accompany him to the Edison Laboratories for the purpose of meeting Mr. Edison.

I shall never forget that first meeting. I was led into the large library which is Mr. Edison's office. This library is located in his private laboratory. It contains perhaps ten thousand volumes, mostly on scientific subjects, and I am sure it is quite correct to say that Mr. Edison doesn't believe a single statement or formula in any of these books, unless he has personally proved its truth. Reference books mean to him merely a starting point for his own research work. He always forges far ahead of the most advanced treatises. To Edison, that which has been written in a book is elementary, no matter by whom it was written, nor how far it surpasses all previous knowledge. When he has occasion to consult a book of reference he first tests the truth of its contents and then begins to explore beyond it. That is one reason

why Edison is Edison. However, I have gone ahead of my story.

There were two galleries of books arranged in numerous alcoves that debouched into a lofty open space. Nearly in the center of this open space was a roll-top desk. Behind the desk sat Mr. Edison. He is not often there, but he was there on this particular morning.

As he rose to acknowledge my introduction to him, I instantly compared him to a lion; an amiable and benevolent sort of a lion, perhaps, but a lion nevertheless. Instinctively I knew that Edison was not a figurehead; also I knew that my employment by his companies depended entirely on *his* opinion of me.

He smiled and drew me into a chair by his side. He did not do this by words, not even by a gesture; he merely conveyed to me in some way which I cannot explain that he expected me to seat myself near him and speak to him briefly and distinctly. As you

MR. EDISON IN HIS STUDY

probably know, Mr. Edison is quite deaf, which fact he counts a great blessing, as it spares him from long conversations.

I was unprepared to say anything. Mr. Edison smiled quizzically and spoke first: "I understand that you're the whole thing with So and So," a firm for which I had been doing some sales promotion work.

Truthfulness, and perhaps a trifle of perversity and possibly the merest pinch of modesty, but chiefly truthfulness, prompted me to reply: "No, I'm not the whole thing, Mr. Edison; I'm merely a cog wheel in the machine."

He smiled approval and asked a few more questions. The president of his companies explained that I was unwilling to sign a contract for a given term of employment.

Mr. Edison nodded, and with a princely disregard for my presence replied: "He's got the right idea. If he makes good, he doesn't need a contract; if he doesn't make good he won't want to stay. *Go ahead.*"

The interview ended there and I became an employee of Thomas A. Edison. At the time I thought he had reached a rather hasty decision. Later I learned that, previous to our interview, he had studied my record as only Edison can study data and, furthermore, had personally instituted, through an agency of his own, a private investigation of my character, habits and ability. My interview with him that morning was merely a "once-over" inspection. I did not know it at the time, but I sustained on that occasion a scrutiny as searching as the Paris police are reputed to give to persons in whom they have a professional interest.

No one knows or probably ever will know exactly what standards of judgment Mr. Edison employs in forming his preliminary judgment of a man. There are treatises on the subject of character reading, but Edison would scorn to adopt the rules expounded in any of them. Whatever rules he uses are drawn from his own experience. Although

partially deaf, Mr. Edison has not cultivated the faculty of lip reading. However, he is an expert reader of human faces. Very possibly he long ago decided that it is less important to read a man's words than to divine the intent behind them. He is a close observer of men's eyes. Also, he appears to entertain a collateral interest in their ears, chins, foreheads and heads, as well.

Thomas A. Edison's activities have brought him in contact with many men in various walks of life. He has sat at countless conferences, deaf and indifferent to the conversational camouflage which most men use to mask their motives, and has studied faces, cataloging each type, I think, and thus arrived at the standards of judgment which he now uses. This is merely my opinion. Perhaps Mr. Edison would not admit that his opinions of men are based on any such classification of his observations. Perhaps he is not even conscious of having made observations of this kind; but if you will cul-

tivate reticence, study the faces of all the men you meet, and classify them by types in the light of their subsequent acts, I am pretty sure that you will ultimately acquire the habit of forming your preliminary estimate of a man very much as Mr. Edison gains his first impressions.

Edison is inclined to be incredulous, and is invariably an indefatigable investigator when he considers a matter to be of sufficient importance to deserve investigation. What I tell him about you, or you tell him about me, he accepts as he does the text of a scientific book. He considers it solely as a point at which to begin the observations or investigations on which his own opinion will finally be based. I have heard men say that Mr. Edison's mind had been poisoned against them. It would be a practical impossibility to poison Edison's mind against anyone. His habits of thought prevent any such result.

Mr. Edison is not vindictive; on the con-

trary, he is magnanimous to the last degree. Nevertheless, he has the kind of memory ascribed to an elephant. You have not really known Edison until he has "bawled you out." I am a hot-tempered man. For many years I have studiously tried to cultivate a more placid temper. Theoretically I have succeeded, but up to date Mr. Edison is the only man in the world who can bawl me out and get away with it. He hasn't done it for several years, but he may to-morrow, and if he does I expect it will benefit me. One day he summoned me to his library and asked me to explain something with which I had absolutely no connection. I started to alibi myself. His eyes flashed with scorn. My alibi was unimpeachable, but the point was that I had no right to have an alibi. I was in the position of a policeman who had permitted a crime to be committed without protest merely because the scene of its perpetration was beyond his beat. Mr. Edison gave me the worst tongue-lashing I have

ever received. It was an exact chronology of all the stupid and ineffective things I had done from the first day I entered his employ, but more particularly it was a recital of the things I had not done that I might have done. His arraignment of me was not altogether just; however, it was extremely beneficial. He punctured my self-complacency without impairing my self-confidence. That " bawl-out " was worth a great deal to me, and I am sure it was worth more to Mr. Edison. He may have been, and probably was, irritated with me, but I believe his outburst was not primarily a show of temper. I think it was chiefly a purposeful test of my gameness.

Edison is the gamest man I ever knew, and I don't think he has much use for a man who *isn't* game. He is also the most scrupulously honorable man I ever knew, and I'm sure he hasn't much use for a man who isn't honorable.

Mr. Edison appears to be a believer in the homely adage that if you " give a calf enough

rope, it will hang itself," and he sometimes applies this theory to his dealings with employees. He likes active and ambitious men, and not infrequently is willing to experiment daringly with such a man for the purpose of determining that man's proper level in the Edison organization. When an experiment of this sort develops a man of unimpeachable ability and integrity, Mr. Edison is as much pleased as he would be at the successful result of an important laboratory experiment. He is careful, however, not to give his entire confidence to any man in his organization until such man has, in his opinion, been thoroughly tried and proved. It is frequently rather difficult to tell when Edison has decided to place implicit confidence in a given employee. Sometimes, although he appears to have extended his entire confidence to this man or that man, it subsequently develops that he had held continuously, in some form or other, what gamblers would call " an ace in the hole." In the or-

ganization of his associates he pursues a policy that is probably understood fully by no one except his son Charles.

In respect of men employed in certain kinds of work Mr. Edison has a habit of weighing the good against the bad, and if the good outweighs the bad, materially, he is occasionally quite lenient toward an employee's bad qualities, provided always that such employee occupies a position in which the evil results of his bad qualities can be guarded against effectually. Probably no one is more fully conscious than Mr. Edison of the evil effects of whisky on both brain and body, yet I once heard him say: " There are *some* booze fighters who are brilliant men. If I *know* a man is a booze fighter I can handle him. I don't like boozers, but in the past I have had a few men of that kind who could get results. Of course, you must be careful about the work you give them, but once in a while you will find a booze fighter who is a good man—while he lasts."

Mr. Edison appears to have a method of his own for determining whether an associate over indulges in strong drink. Several years ago he remarked to an employee who, to say the least, was not a heavy drinker, "Blank, you're drinking too much; better cut it out before it kills you."

Blank protested. "Why, Mr. Edison," he said, "I drink very little. I don't drink anywhere near as much as that man you told me about once."

"What man was that?" Edison inquired.

"Why, that man who used to take five drinks of whisky every day and lived to be ninety years old."

Mr. Edison quickly replied: "Well, how do you know whisky didn't finally kill *him? You'd* better cut out those cocktails and high-balls. Take my advice—*you* never were meant to take *any* drinks."

I have heard it said that Mr. Edison doesn't like a fat man as an employee or business associate. It is true that he hasn't

many fat men around him; but it would be difficult to keep up with Edison and remain fat. I am sure that he has never expressed a prejudice against fat men. He might not be favorably impressed by a slow and ponderous fat man, but I feel confident that an active and live wire type of fat man would not be disqualified on the ground of embonpoint alone. If Mr. Edison seems to manifest a preference for lean men it is because they usually have a greater capacity for and a greater tendency toward physical activity. He appears to regard physical activity as a sort of precursor of mental activity.

Mr. Edison believes in attacking a problem from all sides. He is the only man I have ever known who is capable of reasoning—and almost invariably does reason—both inductively and deductively concerning any subject that engages his serious attention. He abhors what some people call "snap judgment." I think he regards intuition as merely another name for mental lazi-

ness. He not only believes there are two sides to every question, but usually expects to find half a dozen. To ascertain those half dozen different sides of a given question, and resolve them into an answer which is responsive to every phase of the question, is the only solution with which he is content. That is one reason why Edison has no close rival in the field of invention. It is also a reason why his judgment on a business problem is usually very sound. He likes men who will dig down to the roots of every problem they encounter. He has small patience with the man who is content to look superficially at a problem and theorize concerning the number and character of its roots. That is why he likes industrious men. You perhaps have a 10 per cent. greater brain equipment than I, but if I work twelve hours a day and you work only eight, Edison would prefer me to you. He recognizes, of course, that some men are smarter than others, but in his estimation there is no degree of ability that will

outweigh laziness or lack of application. The nonchalant genius of business fiction has no place in the Edison organization. No man can last, or at least no man can achieve importance in Mr. Edison's eyes, unless he is a tireless worker.

There are no golf players in the Edison organization. There are three or four men who play occasionally, but there isn't a man who has his golf regularly in the approved manner. There isn't a case of golf tan—not even nineteenth hole tan—in the entire organization. I don't think Mr. Edison has any prejudice against golf. I doubt if he realizes that there are men who believe golf is essential to their well-being and who imagine they are clearing their brains for the big things of to-morrow when they steal away to the country club from the duties of to-day. That there are no golfers in the Edison organization is not because of Mr. Edison's antipathy toward golf or other outdoor sports, but merely because keeping up

with Edison doesn't leave any time for that sort of thing.

Mr. Edison loves brevity. He believes that the more you know about a subject the more briefly and definitely you can express your conclusions. If you make a written recommendation to him, he likes to have it on a single sheet of paper. He prefers a penciled memorandum to one that has been dictated. Apparently he feels that you are less likely to indulge in needless words when you write with a pencil.

If Edison is called upon to make a decision in a business matter, he demands what he calls "data," in other words, all of the essential facts arranged in the order of their importance and in the plainest possible form. Until an employee has developed the habit of dissecting all important business problems in this manner, Mr. Edison has ordinarily small confidence in such employee's judgment. I am inclined to believe that this is one of the important tests which he applies

to men in forming his final opinion of their abilities.

Edison has seemingly an unvarying system of dealing with new employees. He fills them with the feeling that tremendous responsibilities rest upon their shoulders, and for a time thereafter listens indulgently to their reports of progress. Probably it is this habit which is responsible for the occasional bitter assertion by an old employee concerning a new one: "You'd think a smart man like Mr. Edison would be able to see through that grandstander, wouldn't you?"

In my opinion, Edison is always able to "see through a grandstander," but he realizes that a "grandstander" frequently has abilities which partially justify the self-praise in which "grandstanders" are prone to indulge. Did it ever occur to you that most good men are inclined to be grandstand players in some way or other? Perhaps that is the reason why Mr. Edison is sometimes tolerant of "grandstanders." However, he has

an almost uncanny way of detecting a four-flusher. Within limitations, he will tolerate "grandstanders," but he is utterly antagonistic to "four-flushers."

The man who thinks he can fool Thomas A. Edison is usually fooling himself. Mr. Edison has patience, but he is also extraordinarily successful in appraising an employee's limitations. Although he has a habit of forming an almost instantaneous preliminary estimate of men, he believes that ordinarily he must have a considerable space of time for observation before he can arrive at a final judgment of a man's character and ability. Sometimes, however, he does not hesitate to express a final opinion after his first interview, and in such cases I have never known him to be wrong.

Several years ago I introduced to Mr. Edison a prominent business man who enjoyed a very high reputation. A few hours later Mr. Edison said to me: "That man is crooked; be careful in your dealings with him."

All of my life I have studied men as Mr. Edison has studied acoustics, chemistry, electricity, photography, etc., and I am frank to confess that I thought I knew as much about men as Mr. Edison could possibly know. In this particular case I did not believe he was correct; nevertheless, I had been convinced by careful observation that Edison is seldom wholly wrong about anything, and accordingly I dealt with this man as if I personally believed him to be dishonest. It is fortunate that I did so, as he subsequently proved to be wholly untrustworthy.

I am familiar with Mr. Edison's opinion of a number of different men whom I know quite intimately, and I believe that it would be difficult to formulate more accurate estimates of those men than are embodied in his opinions of them.

One of the conclusions which a thinking man must inevitably form about Mr. Edison, through association with him, is that he never bases a conclusion on a wrong premise. His

conclusion may prove to be wrong, and if so, he quickly abandons it, but I have never known of an instance where he started with the wrong basic thought. He is perhaps over-logical; I rather think he is sometimes. He has a way of driving toward an objective with no regard for tradition, custom, prejudice or any other purely human factor.

This method has brought results in his laboratories that will not be fully appreciated by the public until long after the pages on which these words were written have turned to dust; but the application of his laboratory methods to the commercial aspects of his work is sometimes rather disconcerting to an ordinary business man such as myself. However, I must confess that in the long run the business policies which he formulates usually prove to be sound. I should possibly not now be writing by the soft and steady illumination of an incandescent lamp if Edison had not conceived the proper method of merchandising electric illumination as well as

the best method of producing it. Perhaps I should never have had the opportunity to ride in a trolley car or subway express if Edison had not comprehended and demonstrated the possibilities of electric transportation. When I use the telephone I should perhaps hear more frequently those irritating words, " Line's busy," if Edison, in the early days of the telephone, had not insisted that a time limit be placed on every call, and thus created the custom of brief speech over the telephone. Strange as it may appear, some of his associates wanted to establish a flat charge for each telephonic conversation to a given point, irrespective of the length of the conversation.

Furthermore, I believe Mr. Edison was the first to lay down the commercial doctrine that overhead can sometimes be profitably omitted from cost calculations in figuring on export business. About forty years ago, he said to a group of conferees who sought foreign markets: " If you are not filled up with

domestic orders, cut out your overhead when you figure on foreign business. Use material and direct labor as your cost basis; then add your profit. If you can increase the volume of your sales by developing foreign markets, you can ultimately reduce your domestic prices." This tersely phrased principle of extending foreign trade has since been widely adopted by manufacturers, although Mr. Edison, possibly because of sentimental reasons, has rarely practiced it.

In the pioneering days of the incandescent light industry, Edison pointed out to his associates that it was a mistake, from the money-making standpoint, to base the charges of an illuminating company on the amount of *current* supplied to the user of electric light. "We shall make improvements in our lamps," he said. "Those improvements will result in the consumption of less current. If you want to benefit by the improvements that we make in the lamps, you should charge for the light, not for the

current." Edison's associates preferred the more obvious method of charging for the current consumed, and he did not urge the point. Very probably he was not inclined to oppose a policy which he believed would ultimately result in a lower cost to the consumer.

Events have since demonstrated that Mr. Edison was correct. The improvements made in incandescent lamps have brought about a lower consumption of current per candle-power of illumination, and the direct benefit of these improvements has accrued chiefly to the consumer, although the illuminating companies have indirectly benefited by the more extensive use of electricity which resulted from the lowered cost to the consumer.

There are two Edisons: One is the Edison of coldly scientific mind, who reasons ruthlessly and relentlessly to a conclusion far beyond the average man's foresight. The other is an Edison vividly human, intensely sympathetic, extremely generous and incessantly

active in the interests of mankind. Edison can be the lion that he resembles, he can even be unjust; but he is never avaricious, and he is unfailingly generous.

Some time ago a former employee of Mr. Edison said to me, " He is not, never was and never will be a good business man." That was one man's opinion. My own opinion is quite different. If Mr. Edison had time to make a thorough investigation of the facts, I would as soon have his advice on a financial matter as Mr. Morgan's, and I would accept his judgment on a retail merchandising problem as readily as Mr. Wanamaker's, or his estimate of a manufacturing proposition with as much confidence as Mr. Schwab's.

Such is my judgment of Mr. Edison's capacity as a business man, and I think it is a judgment entirely uninfluenced by my attachment to and admiration for Mr. Edison. The man whom I have quoted to the effect that Edison is not a good business man disagreed with Mr. Edison because the latter

declined to be guided by the expediency of the moment and insisted on a policy that looked to the future. The wisdom of Edison's decision has already been demonstrated by large economies, although it did result temporarily in the inconvenience which Mr. Edison's former associate had prophesied at the time of their disagreement.

I have considered various instances in which Mr. Edison is reputed to have shown bad business judgment, and found them, without exception, to have been cases where his objects, in point of time, lay far beyond the vision of the men who disagreed with him. Edison's foresight is something more than that of the ordinarily far-sighted man. In business, I like to lay my plans two or three years ahead. Mr. Edison believes in planning twenty years ahead—not merely day-dreaming of the future, but actually putting in motion to-day a force that is calculated to produce a given result ten years, or twenty years, hence. Frequently he finds it impos-

sible to get a man who has the necessary vision to work with him successfully on a plan that has its point of culmination, perhaps, ten years in the future. Edison requires a degree of enthusiastic enterprise which cannot be simulated by anyone who does not thoroughly comprehend and fully agree with his ideas. More than once he has abandoned a cherished plan because he could not find a man of the right caliber. Not long ago Mr. Edison said in answer to my objections to a projected enterprise: "Those obstacles can be overcome, if you can find the right man; that's all you need to do—find the man."

Edison has probably never conceived a project that could not be carried through successfully if his lieutenants were capable of grasping all of his ideas and acting at all times in harmony with them. Mr. Edison has a fault not uncommon to great men, namely, that when he has set forth the essentials of an idea, he expects his associates to

comprehend every detail and latent possibility as fully as he himself does. They are not always able to do this, and when they are not he is momentarily inclined to underrate their intelligence as much as he previously overrated it. Experience has made him chary of embarking on any new business enterprise until he is satisfied that he has the right men to carry it to a successful conclusion, which is perhaps partly responsible for the occasional assertion one hears among his associates that " the Old Man has changed his mind again." Mr. Edison sometimes agrees to do a thing which previously he may have refused to do; but when this happens it is because the reason for his previous refusal has been removed. He had been waiting for the right man to develop or the right time to arrive, or some other important factor to be determined. He is sparing of words and does not always reveal all of his reasons for a decision. I have never known Mr. Edison to do a right-about-face without some

good reason entirely consistent with his former attitude. He most assuredly is not a man of vacillating policies. I have known him to change a decision, but I have never known him to change a fundamental opinion, once it had been arrived at in the manner he employs to reach a final conclusion.

Although Mr. Edison plans far into the future, he does not discount the future in the sense of counting on future gains. One of his favorite business maxims is: "A profit is not a profit until it's in your pocket." If he spends to-day a hundred thousands dollars to effect a result to-morrow, he counts that expenditure as a part of to-day's expenses. The assets, which he regards as assets, contain no futurities. I doubt if anywhere there is a sounder business concern than Thomas A. Edison's industries.

I have stated that Mr. Edison attaches a great deal of importance to the caliber of the men who surround him. Except for occasional moments of exasperation, he is tol-

erant of the limitations of his employees, but, as previously noted, is slow to extend his entire confidence—or unlimited authority—to anyone. He has always considered that men constitute the biggest problem in his business. In recent years he has devoted a great deal of thought to the personnel of his organization.

Four years ago his son Charles came into the organization at the munificent salary of twenty-five dollars per week. Mr. Charles Edison had been educated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, then had knocked about the world a bit, on a rather limited allowance, as an additional part of his education, and finally had served a sort of novitiate in various positions with the Boston Edison Company. He seemed a rather self-effacing young man. Neither he nor anyone else knew quite what his father intended to do with him. I don't think Charles Edison, himself, fully realized that he was on trial. Various tasks were assigned to him

and he attacked each of them with commendable zeal. Finally he was given a desk in his father's library, but took no part in the councils of the business. Sometimes he sat silently at the council table. If he had opinions he did not express them.

At length the period of probation was completed. Mr. Edison had applied to his own son the same kind of test he would apply to any other person who entered his employ. Indeed, I am rather inclined to believe that Charles Edison was required to undergo a more severe test than would have been used with a stranger, and if he had failed to sustain it I am sure he would have been rejected quite as quickly as any other person who had been tried and found wanting.

Charles Edison is to-day the chairman of the Board of Directors. He is about thirty years of age. His tastes lie in the direction of business with literature as a diversion. While he has an excellent comprehension of manufacturing and is a good

judge of the utility of an apparatus, he appears to have no aspirations to create through invention.

I have heard experienced business men say of Charles Edison that he has the oldest business head of any man of his age whom they know. Certainly I know of no one of his age who has an equally old head, and I find myself invariably considering his opinions with a respect which I am quite sure I would not accord to those of any other man of similar age among my acquaintances. It is impossible to be associated with Thomas A. Edison and fail to absorb some of his methods and habits of thought. This is done more or less unconsciously, as he detects sham too quickly and detests it too thoroughly to encourage any intelligent man to imitate him consciously. Charles Edison has undoubtedly absorbed, if not inherited, a great many of his father's mental habits.

Edison has with him a number of men who would shine as figures of national importance

in their respective lines of endeavor if their lights were not largely obscured by the greater radiance of Mr. Edison's achievements. Charles Edison, with a noteworthy capacity for organization, has carried out his father's plans in such a way that the research laboratories, manufacturing laboratories, and the various business departments of Mr. Edison's industries are now organized on a basis that employs in the fullest degree the abilities of Edison's most capable assistants. This system of organization was put to a severe test in February, 1917, when Mr. Edison dedicated all of his time to the United States Government. Continuously since then his mind has been almost wholly absorbed by his work for the Government. Nevertheless, his own business has prospered, and he rarely has cause for unfavorable comment when in his spare moments he scans the reports that are laid before him.

WANTED—A MAN WITH EXECUTIVE ABILITY

TURN to the want ad. section of *The Times* and you will find evidence that men of executive ability are not scarce. Under "Situations Wanted" you will observe the advertisements of numerous men who unblushingly lay claim to a high quality of executive capacity.

In hiring men I have frequently asked the question, "Do you feel that you have native executive ability?" I do not recall that I ever received a negative answer. Usually, I also inquire: "How would you define executive ability?" Few of the men who claim to possess it seem to have a very clear notion of what executive ability is. Nor have I.

I know a man who has acquired a considerable reputation as an executive because of three characteristics: his laconic speech, his practice of quickly deciding all questions

submitted to him, and his unwavering adherence to his first impressions. He argues thus: "If you pitch a half dollar into the air a thousand times, the probabilities are that it will fall heads up as many times as it falls tails up. When I reach a decision, I don't mean to say that I'm guessing, but suppose I was, wouldn't I be able to guess right at least half the time—and if you're right fifty per cent. of the time in business, it's a high batting average, isn't it?"

I reminded him of the gambler's maxim that "the man who does the guessing takes ten per cent. the worst of it." "How do they figure that?" he demanded.

"Take, as an example, your own illustration of flipping a coin," I attempted to explain. "If you invariably selected heads, you could scarcely be accused of guessing, as it is probable, in view of the law of averages, that you would be practically even with your opponent at the end of a thousand throws. On the other hand, if your choice fluctuated

between heads and tails, you *would* be guessing and you would assume the highly eminent risk of encountering a succession of results, the exact opposite of your guesses, and entailing upon you losses which it would be difficult for you to recoup unless your pyramided your wagers. Events that are left to chance have no sequence which human faculties can anticipate, and it is the theory of professional gamblers that the man who attempts to anticipate them is at a material disadvantage."

"How about luck; don't luck enter into it?" he inquired.

"The gambler figures that, in the long run, he will have as much luck as the man who does the guessing."

"I see," my friend agreed. "I guess that's right. The man who does the guessing takes ten per cent. the worst of it. I suppose that's why Ike Greenberg always wants me to say whether it's heads or tails when we match for lunch. I'll fool him to-day."

"But," he continued, "admitting, when I decide things in my business, that I guess right only forty per cent. of the time, isn't that a pretty high average—a higher average, in fact, than most business men get—and isn't it better to take snap judgment and keep things moving, even if you are right only forty per cent. of the time, than to fiddle around and get everybody all balled up and still, maybe, not be right more than forty per cent. of the time?"

It is seldom that an executive will make so naïve a disclosure as this man made, but I am afraid there are numerous executives whose methods in many instances, if not habitually, are nearly as primitive as his. Very probably you would not want him to manage a business for you, but quite possibly you are already a stockholder in a corporation which is managed by the same type of man.

"How can such a man be a continuously successful executive?" you ask. Under cer-

tain conditions, it is quite possible. First of all, his fundamental policy, or the fundamental policy of the business which he manages, must be sound. If he formulated the policy himself, he may have hit upon it through sheer good luck, rather than by the exercise of good judgment, but that does not necessarily affect the value of the policy.

The next important condition to his success is that he shall adhere strictly to the fundamental policy which he has established, or which has been established for him. In this connection we encounter what seems a paradox. The executive who, in the decision of matters presented to him in the daily routine of his business, guesses, or " acts from intuition," or takes " snap judgment," or whatever you choose to call it, is, on the average, a little more likely to adhere consistently to the basic policy of his company than the man who makes a purely intellectual function of each decision which he renders.

Why? I am not sure that I know. Per-

haps it is because the policies of a man's business become so deeply rooted in his mind that, in making a " snap judgment " decision where intelligence is largely subordinated to instinct, he acts subconsciously in harmony with fundamental policies and ignores considerations which, with a more careful weighing of the matter in hand, might influence him toward a conclusion at variance with the established policy of his business.

Do I make my meaning clear, I wonder? My thought involves one of the distinctions between instinct and intelligence. Animals, acting from instinct alone, are usually consistent. Man, when guided by his intelligence, is likely to be inconsistent, but such of his acts as are prompted chiefly by his instincts usually show a considerable consistency, although falling far short of the consistency which characterizes the conduct of the average dog or cat. Speaking in a very broad sense, I think we may safely say that the more closely a man's acts are iden-

tified with his instincts, the more consistent his actions will be.

It can be argued that one's instincts are a heritage from one's ancestors and that a human being cannot develop within himself instincts of sufficient strength to exercise a subconscious influence on his *own* conduct; this despite the fact that the conduct of his *descendants,* through the agency of heredity, may be materially affected thereby. I do not hold with that view and my disagreement is based on my observations of men with whom I have been in close association, and I may also say, to some extent, upon my observations of myself.

However, if I have erred, it is in the choice of names. If it is not instinct which a man has developed when we say of him that " it has become second nature to him " to perform certain acts, the thing nevertheless so closely resembles instinct that convenience justifies the use of that word in describing it.

A third essential to the success of an executive who "guesses" (and it is important to the success of every type of executive) is that, having made a decision, he must not vacillate. The guesser rarely does vacillate. Strangely enough, the man who jumps at a conclusion is likely to persist in it more doggedly than the man who has formulated his opinion by exhaustive investigation and careful reasoning.

The fourth necessary element in the success of a "guessing" executive is that he shall be surrounded by capable subordinates, who have confidence in what he calls his judgment and who carry out his instructions with intelligence and good spirit. Here, again, we find that the "guessing" executive and the reasoning executive have needs in common, as no executive can attain the fullest measure of success unless he has the confidence and co-operation of competent subordinates.

Under the conditions I have named, and

assuming that moderately good luck attends his activities, it is possible for a "guessing" executive to round out his business career and go into retirement with an unsullied reputation for exceptional executive ability. Perhaps the probabilities of chance are against so happy an ending of his career, but it is possible—just barely possible.

The phrase, "guessing executive," has rather an unpleasant sound, and it gives one cold shivers to reflect that one's favorite stock may be at the mercy of a president or general manager who decides important matters by guess. To say that a man acts on intuition sounds better than to say that he guesses, but I am unable to see much difference between the two methods. While there are few executives who will admit that they frequently reach important decisions by guesswork, there are a great many who pride themselves on what they call their "intuitive judgment." I have never met a man who possessed "intuitive judgment,"

nor have I ever seen a white blackbird. I expect to enjoy both experiences at about the same time.

I do not think I go too far, or use too strong a term, when I say that a considerable number of so-called executive are, in a large degree, guesswork executives and apply to many of the matters brought before them for decision about the same methods they would use if you asked them to match coins with you. Furthermore, if there is such a thing as the natural executive type of man, I believe that one of his characteristics is likely to be a spirit of impatient daring, which sometimes expresses itself in guesswork, particularly when the controlling facts are difficult to obtain, or require extended consideration for their proper understanding. Therefore, if you feel that you are a natural born executive, and there is any foundation for such opinion, it will not be a bad idea if, every morning when you get out of bed, you make this resolution: " I shall

do nothing to-day on impulse. For my every act to-day there must be the justification of clearly comprehended facts." Make and observe this resolution daily for the next six months and see if it materially changes your methods, your point of view, or the quality of your work. If you really believe that you possess executive capacity, the experiment is worth trying.

I have had a good deal to say about executives and executive ability without giving you a definition of the latter. My silence on that interesting point is quite in harmony with the manner in which most people treat the subject. People who have jobs to fill advertise for men with executive ability, and people who want jobs advertise that they possess executive ability. One complains that he can't get executive ability, while the other bemoans the fact that there is no demand for it. In most cases, neither could tell you what executive ability is. Did you

ever hear a business man undertake to define the term?

Whatever it is, executive ability must be a very curious sort of gift. I know a man who has charge of the employment department of a large corporation. He does not employ the men who fill the more important executive positions in his company's organization, but he does hire a good many men for positions in which the exercise of some executive ability is required. For that matter, there are probably few positions or jobs in any business which do not call for at least a little executive capacity.

Somewhere he chanced to read, perhaps it was in one of Mr. Brisbane's editorials, that brunette men are deficient in executive ability, while blonde men are likely to be gifted in that respect. Therefore, what was more simple and logical than to confine to blondes his selection of men for executive positions? I admit that blonde executive sounds a little like blonde Esquimau, but I am sure that

anyone who carries a potato in his pocket to ward off rheumatism, or believes that a man with a mole on his neck is likely to have money by the peck, or that roan horses have greater stamina than bay horses will readily admit that a blonde executive is almost certain to be superior to a brunette executive.

I am a little in doubt as to the status of a brunette if he turns himself into a peroxide blonde. Perhaps such evidence of enterprise would mark him as a man of the true blonde executive instinct, whose coloring is merely the result of an unfortunate throwback to an out-cross of brunette forbears.

I am further disturbed by the reflection that the increasing preponderance of brunettes in this country may ultimately reduce the available supply of blonde executives to a point where it will be inadequate to the nation's needs. However, I know of a source of supply which is as yet practically untouched. The mountains of Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina and Virginia are

full of men who, so far as their blondness is concerned, can qualify for almost any sort of executive position.

In consonance with the blonde executive theory there are many persons who believe that red hair indicates a hair trigger temper. If your ancestors for several generations welcomed gray hair or baldness as an escape from such epithets as "Red Head," "Carrot Top," "Pinky," "Lighthouse," etc., I dare say you have some excuse if you are both red-headed and quick-tempered.

As between the two theories that redheads are hot-tempered and that blondes are better executives than brunettes, I am inclined to put greater faith in the red-head theory. It can be proved more quickly and, on the whole, with less disastrous consequences.

The notion that blondes are better executives than brunettes is probably derived from the fact that a majority of our earliest settlers were natives of countries where blondes

predominated. Naturally enough, that circumstance resulted, for a time, in a predominance of blonde bosses—or executives. To the blonde executive, who is descended from a line of blonde bosses, I grant the benefit of whatever virtue there may be in the belief that an ancestor's experience develops characteristics which are likely to be transmitted to his descendants in the form of latent abilities. Personally, I think this theory is more dependable in respect of dogs and race horses than when applied to human beings, but if it be a true theory in relation to humans, we must still consider the action of the leaven which has been introduced by the influx of dark-skinned Hebrews, Slavs and Latins, not to mention the frequent black-visaged Teuton, and the occasional brunette Scot, Englishman and Irishman.

Furthermore, we have in this country the saying that " It's only three generations from shirt sleeves to shirt sleeves." Subtract that theory from the theory that, because of in-

herited characteristics, blondes are likely to be better executives than brunettes, and I think we are likely to strike a balance which throws us back on coincidence to support whatever views we may entertain as to the bearing which a man's complexion is likely to have upon his executive capacity.

Coincidence is the wet nurse of superstition, and coincidence is also the foundation of most of the dogmas that are preached from lecture platforms and promulgated through correspondence schools on the subject of judging men, reading character, etc.

Fifty years ago it is quite possible that a preference for blondes in the choice of executives was both justifiable and capable of being exercised without difficulty, but inasmuch as there has been no effective way of preventing the mating of blondes with brunettes, and as the latter, however deficient their executive capacity may have been, seem not to have been deficient in marking their descendants with at least a suggestion of their col-

oring, we are now confronted by a situation where the true blondes appear to be greatly outnumbered by the brunettes and near brunettes. Accordingly, one's choice of an executive is considerably hampered if it must be confined to blondes.

Personally, if I were in search of an executive, I do not think his complexion and the color of his eyes or hair would be taken into consideration. If this is unscientific, the character reading dopesters and tipsters may make the most of it. I am prepared to concede the evil portent of a black cat crossing one's path, and the disastrous consequences that are likely to result from walking under a ladder, and the ominous significance of being the thirteenth guest at dinner, particularly if the cook planned for only twelve, but I am not yet ready to adopt the superstitions which have been welded into the alleged science of character reading.

I can't read character. You can't either. Both of us would probably be wasting our

time if we tried to learn. If you can understand your own character, you are one among ten million. The flash point of oil can be predetermined with a fair degree of accuracy, but the flash point of character cannot. If you get to thinking that you can read character, you will need a lot of luck to keep you out of trouble.

If we are to hire an executive before this article is ended, we must agree now that we are not going to attempt to judge his character by his looks, or by his actions, unless he acts like a hop-head, a booze fighter or a fugitive from justice.

Before we attempt to hire "a man with executive ability," let us try to decide what executive ability is. I don't see how we can continue longer to dodge that question, do you? Primarily, executive ability is the ability to do things. In the cave age the cave man executive was a man who could go and get meat regardless of difficulties. He didn't rely on anyone but himself. In our more

complex modern life, executive ability seems to consist chiefly in the ability to get other people to do things better than you could do them yourself.

I have an acquaintance of German descent who owns a large machine shop. Recently, after listening impatiently to a subordinate's report, he said explosively, " The next time I got to have a fool do sometings, I do it myself."

This man is far from being a fool and takes himself much too seriously to have intended any disparagement of his own intelligence. His irritated remark was merely a somewhat amusing attempt to express the too-common belief among business men that, if you want a thing well done, you must do it yourself. There is a copybook proverb, with which we are all familiar, to such effect and also a most interesting fable which expounds the same theory. However logical the theory may be, it is one that has no proper place in the head of a business executive.

Some years ago a factory manager said to me: "Charles Deere, the plow manufacturer, started me on the road to success. When I came from the old country I got a job as a laborer with Deere & Company, at Moline, Ills. After a time I was made boss of the yard gang. It was the duty of the yard gang to keep the factory grounds in order. There were five or six men under me, and I felt pretty proud of my job. A few hours after my appointment, I took my men around to the office building to remove some debris. Instead of telling the men what to do, I commenced picking up the rubbish, and they stood idly by and watched me. Of course, it was only a momentary condition, but Mr. Deere happened to come to an open window and observe it.

"'Are you the new yard boss?' he inquired.

"'Yes, sir,' I proudly replied.

"'Why don't you have chairs for your men, so that they will be more comfortable

while they watch you work?' Mr. Deere remarked, as he turned away from the window.

"That incident taught me a valuable lesson. Ever since then I have tried to avoid doing anything that a subordinate was capable of doing."

Frequently, I catch myself in the act of zestfully attending to all the details of some relatively unimportant matter, while my assistants stand or sit around and watch me do it. I wonder if all executives, big and little, don't have this fault in some degree. One often hears an executive say, "I suppose I ought not to do this myself, but I can do it in less time than I could tell anybody how I want it done." Such reasoning may be justified, if the task to be performed is not likely to occur again, but if its recurrence is at all probable, the time required to teach a subordinate how to deal with subsequent cases would ordinarily be well spent.

Within the past few months a man who is

more or less of an international figure in commercial and financial circles, acquired control of a large manufacturing company. The general manager of the company was an experienced man and seemed likely to enjoy high favor with the new proprietor. The two took a business trip together. After their return the owner of the company said to his immediate associates: "We've got to put another man in charge of that business. That fellow won't do."

"What's the matter with him?"

"He carries his brains in a memorandum book. If he lost the book, his mind would be a blank. Make him secretary, or something like that, and get a man for manager who doesn't use a memorandum book except for addresses and appointments."

It is doubtful if the reason he assigned was the sole reason for this gentleman's loss of confidence in the general manager, or that he entertains the extreme views about memoranda books which his remarks indicate, but

the incident serves to introduce a discussion of the danger that the secretarial type of man may be mistaken, or may mistake himself, for the executive type.

Most of you have heard the story of Mark Twain's alleged remark to the author of a popular book that had recently appeared: "There's nothing new in your book. I have a book at home that contains everything that's in your book—and a great deal more besides."

The author indignantly refuted this implication of plagiarism and challenged Mark Twain to name the book to which he referred.

"Webster's Unabridged Dictionary," Twain dryly replied.

There are men whose heads are nearly as full of knowledge as the dictionary of words and, in some instances, such knowledge is as well indexed as the dictionary, but not infrequently these men prove unable to coordinate their knowledge into effective plans or policies. They are mere curators of

knowledge, ready to display it upon request, but lacking the ability to make practical use of it.

In choosing an executive, the first peril to avoid is the man who thinks he has "intuitive judgment." Him we have already discussed. Another danger is encountered in the live-wire type of man, whose alert manner, readiness of speech and comprehensive knowledge temporarily blind our perceptions to whatever defects he may have.

I believe Louis XI is said to have made a barber his most trusted adviser, because of the latter's deftness with the razor. I imagine the crafty king had other reasons, but the legend frequently has a substantial equivalent in modern business, when somebody's secretary, or somebody else's assistant, is made manager of something or other, because he always knew what his boss wanted and how to find it. Recently I noticed a correspondence school's advertisement in which, as I recall it, the illustration showed a well

set up young man being promoted to an important executive position, because he had been able to give the directors a scrap of knowledge which they wanted—and which he had obtained in his correspondence course. After making due allowance for the license that it was necessary for the artist to take in expressing this idea in a single picture, I am free to admit that such things actually happen quite frequently and constitute one of the many excellent reasons why a young man should acquire all of the knowledge he can absorb. However, it is rather hazardous to select executives in this way.

Several years ago a company was formed to take over three or four smaller companies. Due either to chance or the standards of judgment employed in selecting men, a considerable number of executive positions were filled with men of the secretarial type. These men proceeded with beautiful precision to perfect an organization which would move like clockwork. The policies of the company

and the duties of its employees were clearly and comprehensively set forth. Every man was a cog and was shown how to mesh with his neighboring cog. Of course, while the organization was being perfected, there was considerable disorder and disorganization, but this was hopefully excused by the promise that " everything will be all right when we get all departments properly correlated." Finally the machine was ready. They pulled the lever. The machine started, but it behaved in a most eccentric manner. Some cogs revolved, while others didn't. Scarely any part of this business machine functioned as it was intended to function. The designers explored the machine with perplexity. " This is covered by instructions; that is covered by instructions; *everything* is covered by instructions," they assured and reassured each other. They were still pothering about, issuing new instructions and enlarging previous instructions when the president and principal stockholder returned from a trip

to Europe. He decided that the machine was too big for the available motive power. "I want a less complicated machine and a bigger power plant," was, in effect, what he said. "I'm going to appoint a new general manager."

He selected a man who had been in temporary eclipse, but of whom associates said: "He's got a level head; he's on the square, and, while I guess he's not exactly what you could call an up-to-date man, when compared with these other fellows, still he always used to be able to get things done."

The new general manager proceeded rather slowly. He tinkered with the organization and gradually succeeded in simplifying it. He built up the managerial power plant by replacing theorists with result-getters and to-day there is probably no more ably managed corporation in the world, or one in which the percentage of administrative expense is lower.

I recall having been in the general offices

of this company at the height of its so-called scientific management. Each floor was crowded with desks, at which clerks were feverishly compiling, or checking, or counterchecking, voluminous reports. Around the edges were quantities of little box stalls that sheltered numerous managers, assistant managers, assistants to assistant managers and assistants to assistants of assistant managers. Office boys rushed hither and thither under the alert espionage of persons duly appointed to see that the company got its money's worth out of each boy. Truly, the scene was inspiring, particularly to one who did not have to pay the bills.

A few years later I was in the same office again. A portion of the office building had meanwhile been sublet and on the floors which I visited, there seemed to be less than half as many men as there had been before.

"What has happened?" I inquired.

"Oh, we just unwound a little red tape and released a lot of men. . . . No, we

didn't fire any of them. Most of them are still with us, but they are out in the field now and doing productive work."

The secretarial type of man and the executive type of man are almost exact opposites, but it is sometimes very difficult to detect the secretarial type and avoid his appointment to an executive post. Frequently he makes a better first impression than the executive type, because his mental processes are more easily comprehended and a sympathetic understanding is more readily established. Perhaps plausibility is one of the symptoms of the secretarial type of man. I rather think it is.

Several years ago I unwittingly selected for a minor executive position the kind of man I call the secretarial type. He started off like a whirlwind and I congratulated myself on the wisdom of my choice. After a time, though, his department began to limp. One day I said to him, "Your men aren't doing so and so."

"I'm all covered on that," he asserted confidently.

"What do you mean you're all covered?"

"It's fully covered in my instructions to the men," he explained.

"What do I care about that? It isn't being done; that's the point I'm making—it isn't being *done.*"

"I'll follow it up right away," he reassured me. The minute he said he would "follow it up," I knew I had a secretary in a manager's job. I didn't want him to "*follow it up.*" I wanted him to see that it was *done.* If, when you ask him for a definite result, a man merely describes the methods he proposes to employ, you can usually be pretty certain that he is the secretarial type of man, who in the event of failure will say, "Well, I did all I could. It isn't up to me. My skirts are clear."

On the other hand, the true executive is seldom very ready with alibis or excuses. When his ship sinks, he usually goes down

with the ship—his colors nailed to the mast.

But, how are we to detect executive ability in men we do not know, or even in men we do know, if the latter have never had an opportunity to show what is in them? I'm afraid there is no certain way to decide whether a man possesses executive ability, unless he has made a record that proves it.

If I am trying to form an opinion of a man's executive ability, I observe with interest the most unimportant things he does. On more than one occasion, I have been somewhat enlightened by the way in which a man tries to hasten the service of his dinner in a crowded restaurant. If he prematurely sends the captain to find out what is detaining the waiter and, a few minutes later, despatches a bus boy after the head-waiter with a view to learning why the captain hasn't reported, I gain a rather unfavorable opinion of his executive ability. On the other hand, if, at the very outset, he establishes a friendly understanding with his waiter and gets the

latter cheerfully committed to haste, and then settles down with apparent confidence in the outcome, I am inclined to be favorably impressed. A "fussy" man is seldom a good executive.

On a certain occasion I was rather well impressed by a young man who, quite unostentatiously, delegated a bell boy to seal, stamp and post his letters, a second bell boy to go to his room and pack his bag and a third to pay his hotel bill, in order that he might leisurely conclude a conversation with my companion and myself and obtain our signatures to a contract before he started for the railway station.

Afterwards my companion remarked: "I'd hate to have to pay that fellow's traveling expenses. He had pretty nearly every bell hop in the hotel waiting on him."

My companion's viewpoint was quite different from mine. The cost of the procedure interested him. The time that was saved for the more important matter of our nego-

tiations interested me. Did the young man show executive ability, or was he merely extravagant? It is perhaps an open question. At the time of which I speak, this young man was a traveling salesman. Lately I have heard of him as the sales manager of his company.

I must frankly confess that I cannot form a satisfactory opinion of a man's executive ability until I have seen other evidences of it than are usually manifested by his speech and actions. What a man has actually done is the best guide and, in my opinion, the only dependable one. Without that guide, you've got to guess—and hope for the best.

THE 50-DOLLAR-A-WEEK GIRL

A GIRL student of architecture in a western co-educational university asks me to write what I would do if I were a girl and had my way to make in the world. Another young woman, who is a special writer on a New York daily paper, makes a similar request. Finally, a prosaic book reviewer advances the same suggestion. This constitutes what a politician would call " a widespread popular demand." Men have run for Congress with less excuse.

What I am expected to do is to forget the new occupations for women, which the war created, and state how I think a fine-grained, ambitious girl can make a permanent place for herself in the business world—a place in which she will not be disturbed when our soldier boys come back to take their old jobs. Therefore, I propose to write about the girl who wants to be a $50-a-week girl.

Young lady, the first thing to consider is your state of mind. How serious are you?

Are you really determined to make good? How game are you?

Seven years ago there came to our office a young girl, just out of high school. She had raven black hair, tremendous eyes and a wonderful complexion of the Latin type. She was a trifle frightened, but a good bit determined. In an emergency she did some work for me. I am averse to male secretaries, and later, when I lost the New England spinster who had been acting as my assistant, I remembered this young lady and she became my secretary. I have never regretted it, but I have no doubt she has, as I drove her finally into a close approach to nervous prostration. She looked after my business correspondence and other business affairs during business hours. At night she transcribed interminable folios of manuscript for me, meanwhile, without my knowledge, taking a university extension course in secretarial work in addition to lessons on the pianoforte, that resulted ultimately in nerve-trying recitals—to which, significantly per-

haps, I was not invited. She grew stale, and I, being uninformed as to the reasons for it, became more and more intolerant of her lowered efficiency. Finally she collapsed and had to quit for a couple of months. Now she is back again, wholly rehabilitated, I judge, but nevertheless in a position to assume a mild pose of martyrdom if she chose, which happily she shows no indication of doing.

I mention this young woman because I think she possibly affords an illustration of a very important quality which every girl in business should cultivate. She was game to the finish. She offered no excuses and asked no indulgence. If a girl goes into business seriously, and does not regard it merely as a pre-nuptial epoch in her life, I think that the example of my secretary is a very good one. To accept uncomplainingly and unostentatiously a man's lot, without being in the least mannish, is the best *basic* formula I know of for a girl's successful career in business.

If I were a girl and twenty-one—or more

or less—there are two things I would do, irrespective of the vocation I intended to adopt.

First of all, I would develop a good vocabulary and the correct use of English. Reading good books is a first-rate method of acquiring a good vocabulary, and it is also an excellent way to acquire the instinctive use of good grammar—otherwise correct English. Reading *good* books is a *good* thing in more respects than one.

Secondly, I would cultivate my voice—not my singing voice, but my speaking voice. I would learn to speak in well-modulated tones and to place my accents correctly, but without the slightest tincture of affectation. Incidentally, if I lived in New York, I should learn not to say, " I sawr her in Atlanter," or if I lived in Chicago, I should avoid saying, " I sez to her jest yestidy."

A girl who speaks good English in a well-modulated voice has a great many advantages over a girl who doesn't. A perplexed

southerner said to me the other day, "I declare, suh, I certainly am confused by the way the New York ladies dress themselves and paint their faces. I just naturally can't tell a debutante from a courtesan—not by looking at 'em, at least; no, suh, not by looking at 'em, can I tell one from the other."

The major's eyes could not distinguish a nice girl from a girl of the streets. Perhaps that is rather a sad commentary on the way New York girls attire themselves, but this is not a discussion of dress, and, accordingly, that point may be ignored. What I wish to emphasize is this: While the major's eyes could not detect the good girls from the bad girls as he surveyed Fifth Avenue's ravishing throng, his ears would have passed instantly a favorable judgment on any girl who spoke in cultured tones. Good English and a well-modulated voice are rather effective safeguards against being misunderstood—and not to be misunderstood is sometimes quite important to a girl who has her own way to make in the world.

Cultured speech, in addition to being a hallmark of propriety, if not of virtue, has other practical advantages. Three years ago two friends of mine and I started a retail store. This store was to be "an experimental store," where we proposed to develop and test out various methods of merchandising an article in which we were interested. It has gained some fame and is known throughout the commercial world as a "Retail Sales Laboratory," whatever that means. There are now numerous stores in this country that are patterned after it; also there is one in Havana and another in Madrid. Now that the war has ended similar stores will no doubt be established in all the principal European cities.

When the operating staff was organized for the original store, we found that we needed a girl. I wrote the specifications of this girl and gave them to our employment agent. She must be thoroughly nice; she must write a fashionable hand (not the

scrawly sort of penmanship that our public schools seem to teach), and she must have a cultured voice, because we expected her to answer the telephone in a way that would make friends for the store.

After a few days the employment agent came to me and said: " I can get you everything but the voice. There don't seem to be any dames with good voices looking for work just now." Finally, however, we found the girl we wanted; a demure young woman who possessed a well-modulated voice as well as the other qualities that were desired. She has since become known to the patrons of the store, with whom she has telephonic conversations, as " the girl with the pleasant voice," and the " experimental store " has demonstrated so conclusively the advantages of having " a girl with a pleasant voice " that a good many other stores in the same line of business have since obtained—or now seek—young women who know how to speak the English language both correctly and agree-

ably. This young lady is now the bookkeeper and assistant manager of the store at a fairly good salary. She had other good qualities, to be sure, but the fact remains that her voice got her the job.

I know of still another case. One day a slip of an Irish girl came to see me. She was an assistant librarian at one of the New York libraries, and her particular stunt was the telling of stories to children. She wanted to make some phonograph records. She didn't possess the kind of voice that would produce what we call " a performance " on the phonograph, but her ingenious personality and her softly modulated voice had a sort of wood violet appeal, which a couple of years later recalled her to my mind, and she now travels the United States and Canada instructing merchants how to put a trifle of practical grace into their merchandising methods. She first served a novitiate of two years in our " experimental store " and developed there the methods that she now imparts to other merchants.

You will note that I have spoken of the career of three girls. Two of them are employing their talents in merchandising and the third, my secretary, may also be regarded as a sort of glorified saleswoman, since a large part of her value in her present position is due to the fact that she has acquired an intelligent comprehension of the various sales problems in which I am interested.

What I have said up to now would probably be summed up by a newspaper head-line writer in a few words; perhaps something like this:

SPEAK SOFTLY, GIRLS, AND BE SALESWOMEN

Accept Man's Lot Without Being Mannish, Is Business Man's Advice

What will my co-ed student of architecture say to that advice? I'm pretty sure she'll sniff scornfully and toss her head. A university course in architecture will seem to her to lead far away from saleswomanship.

Nevertheless, the most successful architects I know are good salesmen. On the other hand, I know of a splendid architect—"a real artist," "a creator of things that endure"—who works, and likely enough will always work, at a modest salary for other architects, merely because he isn't a salesman. It is a plebeian sort of word—salesman—but the quality of successful salesmanship has made more men successful than any other single human quality. If you will look about you and draw off an inventory of the successful men you know, I am sure you will find that a majority of them are good salesmen. This applies to bankers, lawyers, doctors, architects, scientists, engineers, and—even to clergymen—just as much as it does to shopkeepers. No matter who or what he is, a man hasn't really arrived until he can successfully *sell* himself and his work. If salesmanship is good in all pursuits and professions followed by men, certainly *saleswomanship* is a quality which every woman

should cultivate, no matter what her vocation may be.

Were I my co-ed student of architecture, I would devote a great deal of thought to saleswomanship. Anticipating the time when I expected to receive my degree, I should endeavor to develop a definite plan of turning my knowledge of architecture into a commodity and selling that commodity. How can professional skill be turned into a commodity? The answer is very simple. Professional skill is the capacity to give service. The instant you standardize such service and put a definite price on it, you have made it a commodity. I don't know much about architects except that their charges, like those of a lawyer, usually prove to be more than you anticipated, but I am sure that a bright young lady, such as my co-ed student of architecture, could sell her architectural knowedge as a commodity. Possibly, in co-operation with a real estate firm, she could promote the sale of lots in a

subdivision. If the ethics of the architect's profession do not stand in the way, I think Miss Co-Ed might interest a good many people by an advertisement that read somewhat as follows:

Miss Co-Ed
Will Plan Your House

Miss Co-Ed will confer with your wife and incorporate all of your wife's cherished ideas in a home, built exactly as you want it, at

Lonesomehurst

28 minutes from Modern Babylon by Short Island Ry.; Paved Streets; Electric Light; Pure Water, and the most modern sewerage system.

Pay Like Rent

You can buy a large and splendidly located lot in beautiful Lonesomehurst. Miss Co-Ed will help you and your wife plan the house (no extra charge for Miss Co-Ed's services); *we will build the house for you;* and you can pay for this wonderful made-to-order home, a little down and the *rest like rent.*

Etc., Etc.

To be sure, the foregoing isn't a good advertisement. One has to know something about a business before one can write a good advertisement of such business—and I know nothing about the real estate business. Nevertheless, a bad example is better than no example at all when you are attempting to make yourself clear, and I trust that Miss Co-Ed, however much she may scorn my illustration, will not fail to grasp the point I am trying to make. Also I hope that this illustration may suggest to other professional young ladies how their respective professions might, if necessary, be turned into salable commodities.

A clever, well-educated, ambitious and thoroughly nice girl can go a long way toward big achievements in retail merchandising. Three or four years ago Mr. Wanamaker, perhaps the greatest of all retail merchants, remarked to me concerning a well-poised young woman who had paused momentarily to acknowledge my introduc-

tion to her: "She is a college graduate; intended to be a writer. We finally convinced her that good literature could be written about our merchandise in our newspaper advertisements. She does it, and I expect it pays her better than writing books."

That is the point. It does pay to turn your talents to salesmanship. It pays better than almost anything else—and it is tremendously good fun.

If I were a girl I should not study stenography, but if I were a stenographer I would study advertising. Probably I should take a correspondence course in advertising. I would read the magazines that deal with advertising and selling. I would study the advertisements in the newspapers and magazines. I would also study letter writing, particularly the composition of letters that will bring in orders. From time to time, with due humility, I would place before my boss a suggestion for a letter or an advertisement. I'd give it to my boss,

even if he had nothing to do with advertising or sales. If you make an ally of your boss, you will find it a big help.

If I were a sales girl in a department store, I would study what my store's advertising had to say about the goods in my department. When I went on duty for the day I would know what the store's advertisements had led my customers to expect, and my sales talk would not disappoint them. I would constantly keep in step with my store's advertising, which is a thing most sales girls do not do. When an advertisement seemed to have been particularly helpful, I would send a note of appreciation to the advertising manager.

I would also study competitors' advertising day by day, so that I should know what my customers expected to find at the other stores. Then, without knocking competitors or even mentioning them, I would try to picture the virtues of my own store's merchandise in a way to nullify the advertising of the other stores.

I would keep a scrap book of my store's advertising and also of competitors' advertising. In the scrap book I would make, opposite each of my store's advertisements, a marginal record of my sales for that day and I would set down brief comment on the drawing power and selling power of each advertisement, as judged by my experience behind the counter. Whenever I was able to reach a conclusion from this information, that I thought might be helpful to my store, I would bring it to the attention of the proper person. I believe my scrap book data would prove more interesting that the cold figures in the general manager's office.

I would get reference books from the library and study the lines of merchandise that were handled by my department. I would try to become more or less of an expert on all of them.

In short, I would try in all proper ways to attract attention to myself as a capable, intelligent and ambitious saleswoman, and

when I had finally succeeded in doing that, I should want to be able to surprise my employers by the unexpected depths of my knowledge and comprehension of the business. Bluff won't make you a fifty-dollar-a-week girl. You've really got to know more and be able to do more than a fifteen-dollar-a-week girl, if you expect to rise above that level.

Possibly some young lady who left school when she had finished the eighth grade will say: "He's talking all the time about educated girls. What chance has an uneducated girl got?"

It is true that I am talking about "educated girls," and it is also true that an "uneducated girl" hasn't a chance. But what is education? It is not derived solely from schools. As a matter of fact, only a small part of the world's education results from schooling. The more valuable education comes through observation and reflection. The nice girl who dresses in bad taste, who

powders or rouges conspicuously, who chews gum publicly, who uses poor English or who speaks shrilly, shows not so much a lack of education as a lack of observation and reflection. However much lacking in scholarship she may be, she still has the opportunity to learn by observation. Frankly, I don't think there is much chance for a girl who can't perfect her speech, dress and deportment by her observation of cultured people, even though her contact with them is only occasional. Any girl, unless she is hopelessly stupid, can learn to do, say and wear the right thing. After that, what? To what additional lengths can she extend her education, independent of the aid of schools?

Girls can educate themselves to superlative skill in useful pursuits that are capable of being turned into highly gainful occupations. The corsetière who trains herself to be twenty-five per cent. more deft and tactful than her fellows, can become a forewoman and some day perhaps have a business of her

own. The sales girl who studies her merchandise and learns how to present its merits intelligently and effectively cannot fail to progress toward something worth while, if she does not surrender to a sense of fatigue or grow sullen from the conviction that she is being overworked or underpaid. There is no room at the top in business for women—or men—who devote much time or thought to personal grievances.

I have spoken of nice girls several times. In business scarcely any man in his senses has any use for any kind of girl except a thoroughly nice girl. Personally, I think that nearly all girls are instinctively nice girls, but unfortunately some nice girls don't take enough pains to "act nice." In business it's more important to "act nice" than to "look nice," although there is no objection to the latter.

There are a good many fifty-dollar-a-week jobs which girls could fill, but there seem to be very few fifty-dollar-a-week girls. I

think the scarcity of fifty-dollar-a-week girls is due chiefly to the fact that the average business girl cannot devote her mind wholly to her business for any considerable length of time. The instincts of her sex divide her interests and render her incapable of the continuous absorption in its problems which business usually exacts as the price of noteworthy success.

It would require several generations of business women ancestors to produce a race of women who, in general, could compete with men in business on equal terms. It will take more than the war and suffrage to eradicate from women generally the feminine traits which make womankind so admirable, and yet so hopelessly disqualify the average woman for the more important responsibilities of business. The girl who wants to become a fifty-dollar-a-week girl must recognize the temperamental handicaps which her sex imposes. To overcome those handicaps without obliterating her womanly charm

is one of her problems. She must concentrate continuously on her business with the same enthusiastic absorption which, during the war, she displayed in knitting sweaters. In other words she must make her business a permanent hobby. Perhaps that seems worth more than fifty dollars a week, but it must be remembered that the fifty-dollar-a-week girl is very likely to become a hundred-dollar-a-week girl.

My dear young lady, it's a great life, if you don't weaken. There's a fifty-dollar position waiting for you somewhere, if you are brave enough and constant enough to capture it.

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